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ABSTRACT

This report examines the process through which the Minnesota state government established school policy during the 1970s. The analysis focuses on who shaped state school policy and how they did it. The data come in part from personal interviews to determine the perceptions key participants had of the state school policy system. These interview responses, gathered in 1979, are compared with the responses from a similar group interviewed in 1973. Along with the perceptual investigation, historical analysis was conducted on the decision process involved in three major policy innovations (tax and school finance reform, state legislation to guide school district planning for declining enrollment, and a proposal to improve instruction in the K-3 grades). Specific conclusions concerning the roles of various influential individuals and groups (including the governor, the state department of education, the legislature, and various lobbying interests) are presented throughout the report. Four general conclusions are offered. One, while significant change occurred, the basic transformation happened before the 1970s. Two, the involvement of more interest groups increased a tendency toward fragmentation, but this tendency was offset by legislative power. Three, policy-making became more political. Four, the policy-making process continued to be shaped by the state's progressive political culture. (Author/IRT)

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DECIDING STATE SCHOOL POLICY IN MINNESOTA

An Analysis of Policy Participants, Influence Relationships, and Decision Processes in the 1970s

by

Tim L. Mazzoni

December, 1980

EA 013 962

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Grateful as I am for the assistance and cooperation of all these persons, the responsibility for what appears in this report is mine alone.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In Minnesota, as elsewhere, the state has come to be predominant in public school governance. Beginning in 1971 with finance reform legislation, state policy action has occurred on an ever-expanding front in such areas as collective bargaining, teacher certification, racial desegregation, regional services, and district planning. To a large extent, Minnesota state government has become the de facto as well as the de jure policymaker for the public schools.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine the process through which Minnesota state government during the past decade established school policy. This process was affected by many forces, including the demands arising from demographic change, the availability of economic resources, and the traditions of the political system. The analysis contained in this report, however, focuses on the policy actors and their relationships. The emphasis is not on what shaped state school policy, but on who influenced the process and how they did it. Our data come, in part, from obtaining through personal interviews the perceptions that key participants had of the workings of the state school policy system. To give added meaning, interview responses in 1979 are compared with those provided in 1973 by a similar group of policy participants. Along with these perceptual data, historical analysis was undertaken of the decision processes involved in three major state policy innovations for the public schools.

Setting

Policy actors, their relationships, and decision processes are the primary concerns of this study. Yet policymaking cannot be understood apart from the setting in which it occurs. While it is impossible to characterize this setting adequately in a few pages, a brief description is set forth of the legal structure and the central demographic trends, along with a more extended discussion of the cultural context. This treatment, incomplete though it is, will set the stage for the consideration of actors, relationships, and decisions that is presented in the remainder of the report.

Legal Structure for School Governance

Over one-hundred years ago (1857), the Minnesota Constitution was adopted. Among its articles was the mandate to the state legislature that it "establish a general and uniform system of public schools."[1] Within a short time these lawmakers had instituted a "neighborhood plan" for education from which gradually evolved the district system of public schools. Irrespective of the "local control" of these schools, education remained a state function in Minnesota, just as it had in all other states.

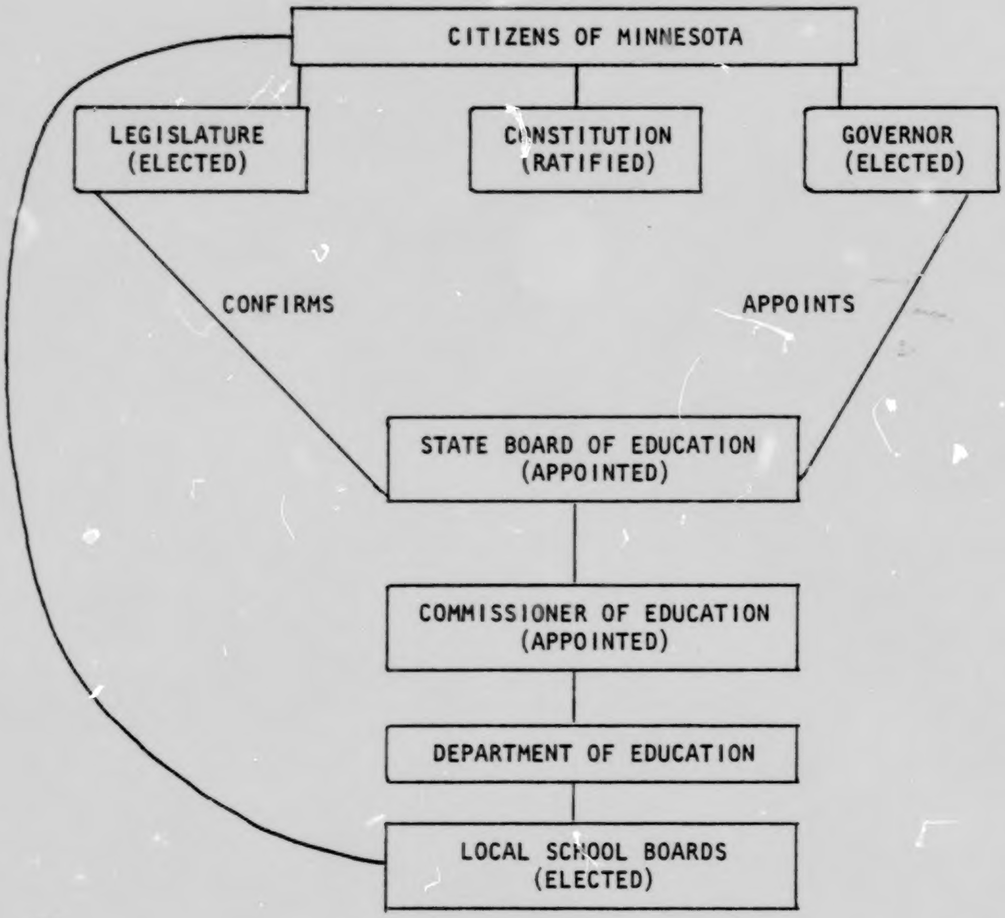
"School districts," in the explicit language of a Minnesota Supreme Court decision, "are governmental agencies wholly under the conrol of the legislature which may modify or abrogate their powers to any extent it sees fit."[2]

Legislative enactments over the years established a state-local structure for school governance in Minnesota. The basic structure, as it existed in the early 1970s, is diagrammed in Figure 1. As this diagram indicates, the state institutions legally responsible for governing the public schools were the (1) Legislature, (2) Governor, (3) State Board of Education, (4) Commissioner of Education, and (5) Department of Education.

During the 1970s the state-local structure for school governance in Minnesota was modified in two ways. First, legislation was enacted in 1973 that established the Teacher Standards and Certification Commission, later to be named the Board of Teaching. No mere advisory body, the Board, having on it a teacher majority, was charged by statute with initiating, formulating, and administering certification for public school teachers, "subject to approval" by the State Board of Education. (A 1980 legislative "compromise" eliminated this veto power, but it also ended the teacher majority on the Board of Teaching.[3]) The second structural change involved the appointment of the Commissioner of Education. By a 1977 law, the appointment process was to begin with a recommendation by the State Board of Education; then the recommendation went to the governor for approval or disapproval; and, if approved, the appointment of the Commissioner went to the Senate for confirmation.[4]

FIGURE 1

LEGAL STRUCTURE FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF MINNESOTA'S PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS


CITIZENS OF MINNESOTA
LEGISLATURE (ELECTED)
CONSTITUTION (RATIFIED)
GOVERNOR (ELECTED)
CONFIRMS
APPOINTS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (APPOINTED)
COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION (APPOINTED)
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS (ELECTED)

SOURCE: Bureau of Field Studies and Surveys, Education 1967 (College of Education, University of Minnesota, August, 1967), p. 275.

Decline of Public School Enrollments

Population trends generate basic policy issues. Of primary importance to school officials are the issues arising from changes in enrollment. In the 1970s, the pervasive condition of public school enrollments in Minnesota was one of decline. The transition from growth to decline was painful for Minnesota's 435 local districts. Declining enrollment often led to increased costs, program cutbacks, staff reductions, school closings, diminished teacher morale, and eroded community support. Minnesota's situation, it should be noted, was no different from most states. Between 1970 and 1975, thirty-seven states experienced school enrollment declines, and growth for the 1978-82 period was projected to occur in only eight states.[5]

In Minnesota, elementary and secondary public school enrollment peaked in 1971-72 (916,255 students); then it went steadily down (a total of 840,157 students were enrolled in 1977-78).[6] Between 1971 and 1975, this decline was approximately three percent. But the forecast for 1978-82 projected an additional decrease of some ten percent. As of 1979, both elementary and secondary school enrollments were declining. Even with elementary enrollment projected to increase slightly for a brief period after 1980, the school age population was predicted to reach a low in 1985. By that time, according to projections, Minnesota school enrollments will be almost a quarter of a million students fewer than in the year of peak enrollment, a decline of 22 percent. Although some districts continued to grow, the vast majority were losing students by the end of the decade. The most severe declines, with projections for 1985 at 40 to 50 percent of the 1970 figure, were occurring in central city districts, inner-ring suburbs with maturing populations, and rural areas with decreased employment opportunities in agriculture and mining.

The problems connected with enrollment decline were many and diverse, reflecting conditions both external and internal to the schools. The basic dynamic of demographic change became closely intertwined with other factors affecting educational institutions. The result was a confluence of forces and pressures with which policymakers had to deal. As identified by Mazzoni and Mueller, these included:

1. Fiscal stress--Associated with mounting expenditures and costs, coupled with a scarcity of resources brought about partly by competition with other public services and tax relief measures.

2. Expanded service demands--Associated with legislative and court actions, at the federal as well as the state level, expanding services to heretofore unserved populations and extending fundamental rights to all employees and clients.

3. Problematic community support--Associated with public skepticism toward the efficacy of educational institutions, changing social values and beliefs, concerns about residential patterns and community maintenance, and perceptions of increased school costs and contracted school programs.

4. School control controversies--Associated with the rapidly growing state role in school governance, expansion of teacher collective bargaining, and efforts of citizens to become more involved in education policymaking.

5. Defeatist attitudes--Associated with lower morale, reduced career opportunities, shrinking resources, and using enrollment declines as the scapegoat for school ills.[7]

Declining school enrollments not only created stress for educational institutions but also posed complex political issues for state government. This was so for several reasons. First, while decline was pervasive, it was not universal. As noted before, a few Minnesota districts were gaining students. Moreover, the fiscal and educational impact of decline was not the same across districts. This meant that declining enrollment had vastly different political saliency for legislators, depending on trends in their districts. Given this situation, constituency-oriented lawmakers were often unable to agree on "the problems," let alone on how they might be solved.

Second, declining enrollment issues tended to be gradual and unobtrusive in their demographic development, then to explode into intense political controversies. Their explosive character was fueled by symbolic attachments, redistributive implications, and relationships to other forces. Declining school enrollment was much more than a dollars and bodies concern. It was a symbolic focus for expectations and anxieties, especially when the survival of an institution like the "neighborhood school" was at stake. Enrollment declines also could produce, or threaten to produce, redistributive outcomes. As a result, the traditional American strategy of leveling up through expanded resources was not available to build acceptable compromises. Finally, the decline in enrollments come together historically with other socio-economic, cultural, and political forces--most notably, with price inflation, energy shortages, skepticism toward schools, and a "taxpayers revolt"--in a way that greatly magnified impact. This interaction exacerbated problems for schools and complicated the resolution of issues for public officials.

Political Culture Context

Many writers have sought to characterize the beliefs, values, and expectations that shape politics in Minnesota;[8] but Elazar's concept of "political culture" offers a particularly systematic organizing framework. In his interpretation, the American political culture is a synthesis of three orientations--Traditionalistic, Individualistic, and Moralistic--each being associated with a geographic region of the country, a legacy of the migration routes of different ethnic and religious groups.[9]

While no state completely embodies any subculture, Elazar concludes that Minnesota comes closer to the moralist pattern than any other; a pattern that encourages (1) governmental intervention to benefit the commonwealth, (2) nonpartisanship and the periodic use of third parties, (3) citizen participation in political activity, (4) professionalism in public administration, and (5) an innovative approach toward policy. Each of these characteristics warrants brief comment.

Government Intervention

Like much Elazar attributes to the moralistic culture, the belief in the efficacy of government was one of the cardinal tenets of Progressivism. This reform movement set the tone and agenda for Minnesota politics from 1899 to 1918, and resulted in legislation extending the regulatory and service functions of the state. Despite the return to "normalcy" following World War I, the Progressive ethos retained a "tenacious hold on the Minnesota mind."[10] According to Leavitt and Nord, "a positive attitude toward state regulation and state aid for society members has been constant" in Minnesota's political culture.[11] And this attitude found greatly expanded expression in state statutes during the 1970s.

The commitment to the use of government as a positive instrument is apparent in statistics as well as legislation. To give but one illustration, the amount of public services made available to Minnesotans compared quite favorably with that provided by other states. Data from 1970-71 on expenditures by state and local governments show that on a per capita basis, Minnesota ranked 10th among all the states with an expenditure of $805 for local schools, highways, and public welfare. The ranking of Minnesota for school expenditures was third among the states.[12] Measures of taxpayer effort also show the same commitment, especially for school support. For example, data on local and state revenue receipts for the public schools as a percent of personal income reveal that Minnesota's figure of 6.3 percent in 1970-71 ranked it tied for third among all states; its figure of 6.1 percent in 1977-78 ranked it tied for fourth.[13]

Party Organization

Elazar contends that party organization in a moralistic culture is perceived as being simply a useful political device. "Regular party ties," he observes, "can be abandoned with relative impunity for third parties, special local parties, or nonpartisan systems if such changes are believed helpful in gaining larger political goals."[14] Such an attitude toward political parties has long been present in Minnesota. In no state, other than Nebraska, was nonpartisanship more firmly established nor has any other state witnessed more third-party success.

Even state legislators were removed, formally at least, from partisan politics. The passage of the 1913 law was in accord with Progressivism's distrust of organized parties and its exhortation to citizens that they engage in "independent voting."[15] Once passed, the act remained on the books until 1973. But while the legislature was officially nonpartisan until that time, its members caucused as either Liberals or Conservatives, and these affiliations became closely aligned over time with the Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) and Republican parties, respectively.

The consequences of nonpartisanship for Minnesota politics have been much debated. Supporters assert that it smashed bossism and the political machine; that it worked to purify politics and expand opportunities for citizen involvement. In this vein, Fenton maintains that nonpartisanship contributed in Minnesota to a distinctive "issue-oriented" approach toward politics, rather than one which is "job-oriented."[16] But critics argue that party weakness opened the way to excessive pressure group influence, irresponsible political behavior, and vulnerability to extremism. And Gieske contends that there is as much patronage and power orientation as issue debate in Minnesota's political culture.[17]

As for deviant party movements, even a cursory look at Minnesota history reveals a veritable "brood of third parties." Political protests and reform movements have been recurrent elements in the state's politics.[18]

Most significant as an organized expression of this ferment was the Farmer-Labor party, which became a major political force in state government during the Great Depression. Although thwarted in their more radical proposals, Farmer-Laborites did push through much reform legislation. But the crushing electoral defeat of the party in 1938 signaled its demise; the fortunes of the Farmer-Labor party worsened until it merged in 1944 with the Democratic Party to form the Democratic-Farmer-Labor party.[19] From that time, political conflict in Minnesota has become institutionalized through a competitive two-party system.

The emergence of partisanship in Minnesota did not constitute a repudiation of Progressivism. It certainly did not bring in its wake the crasser aspects of party influence. The political boss and machine politics remained rare in the Minnesota experience and the independence of its voters was evident in their ticket-splitting at election time. Further, Republicans, as well as DFLers, drew political sustenance from the Progressive tradition and maintained their credibility by asserting its compatability with their policy proposals.[20]

In the 1970s, it did appear for a time that the competitive two-party balance had been rejected by Minnesota voters. The DFL surged forward in the 1970 and 1972 elections to capture not only the governorship (an office its nominees had held before in 1955-1961 and 1963-1967) and the House (controlled by Liberals in 1955, 1957, 1959, and 1961), but also the Senate (a Conservative bastion for decades).[21] In the 1971 session the Conservatives (i.e., Republicans) still held thin margins in the House, 70 to 65, and the Senate, 34 to 33. But by the next session, the Liberals (i.e., DFLers) were in the majority 77 to 57 in the House and 37 to 30 in the Senate. With the 1974 election the DFL had swept all state offices and held control in the legislature, 103 to 31 in the House, 48 to 19 in the Senate. So powerful had the DFL become that scholars worried about a possible "one-party monopoly" and the "quasi-machinelike administration... in control of Minnesota government."[22] "The democratic seventies," Gieske wrote, "are highly partisan, modeled much more along lines of the so-called majority rule responsible party system...and for better or worse seems to be at odds with the tradition of political independence Minnesota voters and parties have so valued."[23] This worry, however, proved to be premature as the political pendulum swung back toward the Republicans (renamed Independent-Republicans) at the close of the decade, with the election of a governor and an even split for most of the '79 legislative session in the House.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation in politics takes many forms, but voting is the most fundamental. State-by-state rankings on voter turnout in many kinds of elections always show Minnesota near the top. Institutional manifestations of citizen involvement are easy to find. The use, for example, of advisory committees or task forces is widespread at both the state and local levels of government. More important is the openness of party precinct caucuses to citizen influence regarding both candidates and issues. Participation in caucus meetings increased from one-tenth of a percent in 1946 to three percent in 1972 and 1974.[24] "This system," Leavitt and Nord conclude, "has increased participation, strengthened the parties, and made them more responsive to the public on issues."[25]

A particularly effective citizen-based organization with respect to issue identification and policy formulation was the Citizens League. Since its beginning in the early 1950's, the League functioned as "an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit, educational corporation." Members numbered some three thousand persons drawn largely from business, professional, and civic organizations in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. As its principal activity, the League, through volunteer committees assisted by staff, conducted studies and made recommendations on a wide variety of policy issues. The reports of the Citizens League were typically both well done and widely publicized. Since they represented a skillful mix of technical expertise and citizen advice, backed by a prestigious organization whose members had connections to many power networks, League reports were taken seriously by public officials.[26]

Professional Administration

Given the vigor of the Progressive attack in Minnesota on the foundations of party organization, the application of civil service provisions to state administration was remarkably slow in coming. Progressive governors enjoyed no great legislative success in curbing the "spoils system," and it was not until 193[illegible] that civil service reform for state employees was accomplished.[27] Once adopted, though, the scope of this reform was sweeping. In no state agency was this more true than the Minnesota Department of Education. Until the mid-1970s, all employees of the Department, other than the Commissioner of Education, were covered by civil service regulations.[28] Protection against patronage and political control was afforded by these regulations--in this sense, the Department of Education was a "professional" as contrasted with a "political" agency. But, as a consequence, the Commissioner had no freedom to set up an administrative team. By the middle of the decade, however, some top Department positions had been declassified, including the two Deputy Commissioner posts and most of the Assistant Commissioner positions.[29]

Policy Innovation

Although Minnesota may not have the reputation of its eastern neighbor, Wisconsin, as a pioneer when it comes to the adoption of new programs, it still has been unusually receptive to innovation. Minnesotans, as has been noted, have been more than willing to experiment with the political party, and among their public officials have been many who have taken advanced positions on critical social issues. Hubert Humphrey's courageous stand on civil rights in 1948 and Eugene McCarthy's determined crusade against the Vietnam War some twenty years later are quite consistent with Minnesota's long tradition of protest against social injustice.

A quantitative attempt to assess the relative speed with which states accepted program innovations was undertaken by Walker in the late 1960s.[30] He based his index on eighty-eight different programs in twelve areas of governmental activity. The composite innovation score for Minnesota ranked it 12th among the states. The application of Walker's index to Minnesota, in that it weighed all programs equally and did not take social need into account, produced a ranking that probably underestimated the relative willingness of the state's political system to innovate. A case in point is the impact of metropolitanization. If this, under the rubric of the "urban crisis," is a critical problem confronting the states, then Minnesota's response merits it being called a pacesetter. Not only has a Metropolitan Council with some real powers for regional planning and service provisions been functioning since 1967, but the passage in 1971 of the Fiscal Disparities Act marked a promising beginning in sharing more equally the property tax base of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area among its "have" and "have not" communities.[31]

Summary

Leavitt and Nord have used polling data to describe the emergence in Minnesota of a "cooperative commonwealth culture." They summarize their findings as follows:

> The public has a moralistic outlook, shows high involvement in and knowledge about government, is issue-oriented, conforms to the law, seems tolerant and willing to change opinions when confronted with new information, and has a sense of civic duty without expectation of personal gain. They do not show respect for politicians or have faith that they will serve public interests. They reflect what Elazar calls a moralistic culture...[32]

Impact on School Policymaking

All the political characteristics that have been discussed impinged in one way or another on state school policymaking during the 1970s. The high aspirations that Minnesotans held for public services were expressed most strongly concerning education. A competitive two-party system generated a search for new political issues, one source of which was education. The DFL ascendancy gave new impetus to school finance and collective bargaining reform. Citizen participation had several important manifestations, including the influential policy reports of the Citizens League and state legislation designed to expand community participation in planning, evaluating, and reporting by local school districts. The application of civil service regulations was extensive in the Minnesota Department of Education. And, lastly, the willingness of the state's political system to innovate was well demonstrated by its policy responses to public school issues.

CHAPTER II

POLICYMAKING RELATIONSHIPS

The focus of this chapter is on the actors who decide state school policy in Minnesota and their influence relationships. Perceptual data are employed, with the perceptions used being those of state school policymakers: public officials, agency administrators, and interest group representatives. While their assessments of the process may well differ from those of other persons--and from findings based on different research methods--policymaker perceptions constitute in themselves an important reality. To obtain these data, interviews were held during and immediately after the 1979 legislative session with a cross-section of policy actors. Comparisons with a 1973 set of interviews were facilitated by using, for the most part, identical questions as with the earlier group and by interviewing persons in the same positions. The numbers of persons, by category, interviewed in each period were as follows:

	1973	1979
Governor's Office (includes personal staff and State Planning Agency)	2	2
Legislative Leaders (e.g., Majority and Minority Leaders of the House and Senate, Committee Chairmen, and school finance specialists)	15	17
State Board of Education Members	6	9
Top Department of Education Administrators	4	3
Educational Interest Group Leaders (e.g., officials representing the teacher, administrator, and school board organizations)	5	12
	32	43

Carefully structured interview schedules were employed with these respondents, and each person was also given a short questionnaire to complete. (Eighty percent returned the questionnaire in 1973; seventy percent did so in 1979.) Much information obtained from these two instruments was quantifiable. Therefore, data tables often are relied upon in presentation of findings, with the function of the narrative being to highlight or summarize.

Any political analysis rests on some framework of concepts and assumptions. Those which structured our analysis of relationships are as follows:

1. Policymaking is an allocative process in which competing individuals and groups seek to obtain decision benefits, symbolic as well as material, through the exercise of influence. This assumption suggests the influence of a policy actor is only understood in comparison to that of other actors. This means that policymaking influence is not to be measured on an objective, absolute scale; that assessments of influence always are judgmental and relative.

2. Influence refers to an actor's capacity to select, modify, or achieve the decision benefits of a policy system. Countless approaches have been employed to try to measure influence. The approach used here was to ask interviewees how much "influence" (or "importance" or "impact") they attributed to the various policy participants both in general and with respect to the different stages of a decision process.

3. Arenas where authoritative decisions can be enacted are the focal points in the policy process. School policy at the state level is primarily determined in two arenas. One is the legislative arena where legislators and the governor are the authorities; the other is the education agency arena where legal responsibility rests (except in Wisconsin) with a state board of education. Although the legislative arena is by far the more important of the two, since basic fiscal decisions as well as school laws are enacted there, influence in the agency arena must also be considered in analyzing policymaking relationships.

4. Policymaking influence is dependent on control of appropriate resources and their skillful use. Power resources and strategies are many, but for most state policy actors they fall into two broad categories: electoral in which the intent is to influence the recruitment and selection of lawmakers, and lobbying in which the intent is to influence the decisionmaking behavior of these officials.

5. Influence relationships among policy actors tend to be reciprocal and are indirect as well as direct. In contrast to the simple pressure group model that posits a unilateral and direct influence relationship between an interest group and public officials, this proposition points to the likelihood of reciprocal relationships and the deliberate involvement of third parties to exert influence on policy issues.

6. Informal, as well as formal, rules shape the application of influence in policymaking. Besides a legal structure, the pursuit of interests in policymaking takes place within normative constraints. The successful application of power in a policy system usually requires that it occur within the "rules of the game" of that system as well as within those of the broader culture in which the system is embedded.

To make the study findings and analytic commentary more meaningful, this chapter is organized around six general characteristics of Minnesota state school policymaking in the 1970s: (1) fragmentation of the public school lobby, (2) "teacher power" as a political reality, (3) constraints on the legislative role of the Department of Education, (4) policy initiation from the education agency arena, (5) episodic involvement of the governor's office, and (6) assertive leadership from the legislature.

Fragmentation of the Public School Lobby

An interest group perspective is often used to look at state school policymaking, with the most recent analysis concluding that, whatever is "new" about this process, "the politics of education at the state level is still a politics of interest groups."[1] Applying such a perspective to Minnesota's past discloses that a basically consensual pattern of relationships among public school groups, and between these groups and elected officials, gave way during the mid-1960s to a pattern marked by intense conflict. Before examining this pattern as it evolved in the 1970s, it is useful to place it in historical context.

The Period of MEA-MSBA Cooperation

At the beginning of the 1960s, the two major public school groups--the Minnesota Education Association (MEA) and the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA)--worked in concert. The MEA represented administrators, as well as teachers, with organizations like the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA) being included under the MEA umbrella. In fact, the leadership positions in MEA were largely controlled by school superintendents. As for MSBA, its membership consisted of persons serving on local school boards, the vast majority of whom came from the rural, outstate districts.

The MEA and MSBA created structural arrangements to enhance collaboration among the groups interested in the public schools. A MEA-MSBA joint committee was established in 1949; five years later, the Minnesota Coordinating Committee on Education (MCCE) came into being. Its stated objective "was to gain a united front from both professional and lay educational organizations on matters relating to the structures, policies, and financial support of the public schools of Minnesota."[2]

While such mechanisms did foster agreement, there were personal ties of equal importance. Specifically, there was the relationship between A. L. "Bud" Gallop, Executive Secretary of MEA, and W. A. "Bill" Wettergren, Executive Secretary of MSBA. These men had attained considerable stature with the Minnesota legislature. They were well known and highly respected as lobbyists. Both had influential friends in the legislature, especially among Conservatives, the caucus which dominated the Senate and usually held sway in the House. Gallop and Wettergren also were successful in having their advice considered by Minnesota governors.

There was only one discordant element in all of this; that was the Minnesota Federation of Teachers (MFT). Because of its pro-union militance, the Federation was isolated from the other school groups, not being included during this period in MCCE. But the MFT, at this time, had little independent political power at the state level. Despite having sizeable memberships in city districts, MFT had no support in most areas of the state and probably had slight legislative impact aside from its affiliation with the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

Along with their ability to coordinate a legislative approach, the MEA and the MSBA had other influence resources. One was their perceived expertness on educational matters, a resource that was augmented by a capacity to provide, often in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Education, information to legislators on complicated subjects like school finance. And on critical issues MEA and MSBA leaders could issue "calls for help" to their memberships, the result being energetic letter-writing campaigns and personal contacts directed toward legislators.

Yet, other than the MFT, school interest groups in the 1960s rejected organized attempts to become involved in the election of state officeholders. Such a venture into "politics" was not seen as being compatible with the posture of being nonpartisan and objective.

Interorganizational unity, expertness and information, and grassroots communications--all contributed to the legislative strength of the public school groups and their allies during the two decades following World War II. More basic, perhaps, was the traditional commitment of Minnesotans to education. The public schools held a "special place" among the objects of state government attention. Mitau observed that Conservatives, as well as Liberals, were always willing to provide support for education even as they condemned spending for "less worthy" public services.[3]

Forces for Change

Harmonious relationships among state-level school interest groups came to an end during the 1960s. The challenge to the MEA posed by the more militant MFT became intense. Competition for members, along with other factors, moved the MEA to adopt an increasingly aggressive posture on the collective negotiation issue. At the beginning of the decade, MEA officials, as well as those from the MSBA, were hopeful that the "guidelines" which they had developed for teacher-school board relationships would obviate the need for state laws. But, in time, MEA leaders concluded that this approach was not workable; they began to press actively for legislation. By 1966, this organization was lobbying for a negotiating council in each district, a council that would represent all professional organizations. The council idea was incorporated in a "Meet and Confer" negotiation law enacted by the Minnesota legislature in 1967.

The MSBA considered these legislative thrusts to be a threat to "the local autonomy of school boards;" it would have preferred that no measure requiring negotiations with teachers pass the legislature. The MSBA did introduce a bill, but only when it became evident that there were irreconcilable differences between its position and that of the MEA. (The MFT and MASA also had separate bills before the 1967 legislature.) The stance of MSBA became one of "defensive lobbying," a stance that it maintained in the face of continued teacher demands for a stronger negotiation law, improvements in teacher benefits, and expanded professional participation in school decision-making. By the end of the decade, the MEA and the MSBA were publicly at odds on a host of employer-employee issues.

As controversies between organized teachers and school boards erupted, the position of administrators within MEA became untenable. Their organizations withdrew from that affiliation and began to act as independent interest groups. The most influential was MASA, the organization that spoke for school superintendents. As for the Minnesota Coordinating Committee on Education, it did continue to function, and its membership was actually enlarged to include, among others, the MFT. But as a device to coordinate the legislative efforts of the school interest groups, it ceased being effective. In the pithy language of one founder, the MCCE had become "as useless as teats on a boar."[4]

Conflicts Among School Interest Groups

No longer, then, was the Minnesota legislature the recipient of policy initiatives on which most school supporters were in agreement. Instead, on major educational issues the legislature was beset by an array of competing proposals and positions. During the 1970s, this competitive milieu continued to expand as the diverse constituencies in education were increasingly heard at the state level. The expansion of the state policy arena reflected several basic forces, one being the financial pressure on schools as a consequence of enrollment declines, price inflation, and eroding public support; another being the widespread belief among educators that state government had become the new locus of school policy action.

Among the school groups that originated in the seventies, none received as much comment from our '79 legislator respondents as the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD). Formed in 1974 to represent seven declining enrollment districts in the Twin City suburbs, AMSD had grown by 1979 to include 23 such districts, districts that collectively were responsible for educating some 165,000 K-12 students.[5] Concentrating on state school aid changes, notably "declining enrollment assistance" that would benefit member districts, the Association was widely seen as having influence in this critical legislative area. AMSD not only represented a large constituency but also produced "data exhibits" justifying its legislative proposals, fostered member contacts with metro lawmakers, employed a professional lobbyist, and developed access to key school finance specialists in the legislature.

While the perceived influence of AMSD did not match over a range of issues that of the teacher and school boards organizations, school finance legislation in the late 1970s--especially efforts to "cushion" the fiscal impact of declining enrollment--clearly bore the imprint of the Association. Such success, it might be noted, did not go unnoticed. In 1977, another grouping of metropolitan school districts, the Association of Stable and Growing School Districts (ASGSD), began a more modest effort toward legislative lobbying to advance its particular interests.

Despite the cacophony of educator voices at the state capitol, the '79 legislator respondents saw the main public school groups as more united than they were seen as being by the '73 legislator respondents (see Table 1). Fourteen out of 15 respondents in 1973 perceived these groups as acting together on only "some" or "almost no" issues; just once respondent chose the adjective "most" when assessing intergroup unity. But in 1979, 11 of the 16 legislator respondents selected "most" or "nearly all" in answering the same question. The '79 legislators viewed the school groups as being able to concert their activities on the essentials of the school aid package, though they were seen as taking opposing stands on specific bills, such as Governor Quie's proposal for increased K-3 funding, and as being fundamentally divided over collective bargaining.

Collective bargaining issues were pointed to by all respondents as the main line of cleavage splitting the school groups. The basic labor-management division, in which the main adversaries were teachers and school boards, had been widened by recurrent disputes, state as well as local, over bargaining. And notwithstanding the talk in the early 1970s of

TABLE 1

LEGISLATOR ASSESSMENTS OF THE UNITY OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL LOBBY

Question/Response Categories	Responses of Legislators	
	1973 (N=15)	1979 (N=16)
"To what extent do the major (K-12) education groups--i.e., teachers, administrators, and school boards--act in unison and speak with one voice?"		
"Nearly all legislative issues"	0	2
"Most legislative issues"	1	9
"Some legislative issues"	7	4
"Almost no legislative issues"	7	1

expanded cooperation--even a merger--between the MEA and the MFT, the end of the decade was marked by escalating rivalry extending to higher education and even to public employee unions, and much disagreement between the two teacher organizations over such collective bargaining issues as binding arbitration and strike provisions.[6]

Nor had there been much consolidation on the management side of the cleavage. There was coordination of legislative proposals between the MSBA and the MASA. And there were efforts on the part of both, especially MASA, to work with the principals' organizations. Still, the '79 respondents from these organizations saw no close working relationships on the management side, although there was an umbrella organization: School Administrators of Minnesota (SAM). Part of the reason for this stemmed from the fact that in Minnesota school principals had the right to bargain collectively with school boards and superintendents.

The divisions among educator groups were, of course, only a part of the structural fragmentation of school policymaking at the state level. Important institutional arenas included legislative committees and subcommittees, executive offices and agencies, and administrative boards. Besides these arenas, there were the many structures of private influence. Communications among the school groups, and between these groups and public officials, were facilitated by individuals and organizations who sought to link up the disparate sources of legislative, executive, and interest group power. Among those who performed this function were school lobbyists, as well as legislative staff persons and agency administrators. Their relationships, forged often over many years, permitted discussion and bargaining across institutional barriers.

Also forging new links in the policy system were two programs that the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C. had extended to the states: the Associates Program and the Education Policy Fellowship Program. Both programs worked to foster interaction among politicians, administrators, staffers, analysts, educators, and others interested in educational policy. But the most important linkage organization was BELL--Better Education Legislative Liaison.

As stated in its original constitution (February, 1976), the purposes of BELL were:

> 1. To help Minnesota legislators and representatives of BELL member organizations to keep abreast of developments and trends in school finance and related areas.
> 2. To facilitate communications among the member organizations of BELL.
> 3. To become aware of and study problems in the area of school finance and to seek solutions which may be helpful to the legislative efforts of member organizations.
> 4. To sponsor conferences, workshops, and informal meetings--the purpose of which is to accomplish the above stated goals.[7]

Regular (voting) and associate (non-voting) members of BELL included the major teacher, administrator, and school board organizations; the city school districts; AMSD, ASGSD, and Iron Range districts; and groups representing special education and vocational education. A key member was the Minnesota Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA). Its lobbyist had taken a leading role in the formation of the BELL group and as a "neutral" had always acted as its chairperson.[8]

BELL met regularly during the legislative session, with the lobbyists usually representing their respective groups. Nearly all the '79 lobbyist respondents agreed that the primary function of the organization was as an "information clearinghouse." As phrased by one lobbyist, the three questions typically asked about pending legislation were: "What is the amendment? What does it mean? Where is everybody on it?" Along with sharing technical and political information, BELL performed other functions. Several respondents observed that it provided a "forum" for legislators and other state officials to test their education policy proposals with persons who spoke for public school interests. Also, BELL served a social function by bringing the lobbyists together so that they could cultivate or maintain relationships, check out one another's positions, and even "lobby other lobbyists." Finally, BELL provided a network of educator groups that could be drawn upon for conferences and workshops on important issues such as the implementation of special education (P.L. 94-142) regulations.

Most participants in the BELL group were very positive about the usefulness of the organization. "A beautiful communication vehicle that is necessary" were words that reflected a common sentiment. Even so, there were indications of strain within the organization--notably, between the MSBA and the other groups, with the former depicted as especially willing to adopt a "go-it-alone" posture. In the opinion of one critic, BELL was excessively tilted toward the teachers, administrators, and PTSA; in his language: "It's a kind of half-ass social gathering to get together and share information and cry in one another's beer."

Although the school interest groups, through BELL and other means, had improved their capacity to communicate and coordinate their activities on state policy issues, the insularity of these groups, as a collectivity, persisted through the decade. Few lobbying relationships existed with higher education interests, and conflict with these interests looked increasingly likely for the 1980s. Nor had most of the public school groups forged stable political associations with noneducation lobby groups. Only one such group was frequently identified by the '79 lobbyist respondents as working closely with any educational organization on an important issue; that was the Minnesota AFL-CIO on collective bargaining legislation. Clearly, insularity, as well as fragmentation, characterized the public school lobby in Minnesota throughout most of the 1970s.

"Teacher Power" as a Political Reality

Divisions in the public school lobby did not mean its impotence. Indeed, these organizations seemed to have had more lobbying influence, relative to other groups, at the close of the decade than at the beginning. In 1973, only 40 percent (6 out of 15) of the legislator respondents rated the K-12 educational interest groups, collectively, as "the top groups;" in 1979, more than half the lawmakers (10 of 17 respondents) gave the highest rating to these groups. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2

LEGISLATOR RATINGS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL LOBBY

Question/Response Categories	Legislator Responses	
	1973 (N=15)	1979 (N=17
"How influential with the legislature are the main education (K-12) organizations compared to other interest groups? Would you say that, taken together, these organizations are:"		
"The top groups"	6	10
"Among the top groups"	8	7
"Among the less important groups"	1	0
"Not at all influential"	0	0

It would be a mistake, of course, to infer from such ratings that lobbying power per se was the central force in the Minnesota legislature. Our school lobbyist respondents certainly did not think so, as one remarked: "On a scale of one to one hundred, legislators respond to the education lobby at about a thirty level. We aren't the movers and shakers. We're really supplicants in the process." Nor did legislative leaders rank interest groups high among the influences that shaped major legislation. In a recent study of K-12 education lobbyists in Minnesota,[9] Sullivan reported that legislator interviewees ranked the general factors influencing their policy decisions as follows (mean scores on 1-8 scale shown in parenthesis):

Personal Feelings (5.5)
Wishes of Constituents (5.1)
Recommendations of Colleagues (3.5)
Recommendations of Staff (2.9)
Views of Interest Groups (2.3)
Recommendations of Friends (2.1)

Obviously, there are many reasons why both lawmakers and lobbyists like to play down the impact of private power in the legislature. Yet it is a common perception in St. Paul that such power counts for less than it did ten to fifteen years ago.[10]

When asked to identify and rank order the "most influential" groups on K-12 education and school finance issues, legislator respondents in both 1973 and 1979 largely confined their nominations to one of three groups--MEA, MSBA, and MFT--a "Big Three," so to speak, in state school policymaking. Significantly, perhaps, there was somewhat more dispersion of influence nominations in 1979 than in 1973. In the earlier study, almost 95 percent of the responses were confined to the top three groups; in 1979 this had dropped to 81 percent, with organizations such as AMSD, MASA, the principals' associations, and PTSA each receiving a few nominations as particularly influential.

As for the most influential group, there is consistency across respondents and over time in rating MEA as the top group. In Table 3 are contained legislator leader responses, with Wannebo's 1968 survey results being reported along with our 1973 and 1979 interview data.[11] Education lobbyists responses also are shown for the latter two periods. As can be seen from these data, MEA was rated by nearly all respondents as among the most influential groups, and by a majority in every case (except for the education lobbyists in 1973) as number one. While MSBA was always nominated by most respondents as being influential, its ranking relative to MEA appeared to erode a bit during the decade. Further analysis (not shown in the Table) disclosed that the School Boards Association received quite different ratings in 1979 depending on the party affiliation of the legislator respondent: Independent-Republicans ranked the MSBA noticeably higher than did DFLers. Party division was true, too, for MFT assessments. As might be expected with its labor ties, the Federation was rated most positively by DFL respondents. And, unlike the MSBA, the MFT's perceived influence grew somewhat between 1973 and 1979, at least with the kind of legislators who were interviewed.

TABLE 3

LEGISLATOR AND LOBBYIST RATINGS OF "MOST INFLUENTIAL" SCHOOL GROUPS

Group	Percent of Legislator and Lobbyist Respondents Nominating Group as "Among Most Influential Groups"					Percent of Legislator and Lobbyist Respondents Ranking Group as "The Top Influential Group"*				
	1968	1973		1979		1968	1973		1979	
	Leg. N=29	Leg. N=15	Lob. N=5	Leg. N=16	Lob. N=11	Leg. N=29	Leg. N=15	Lob. N=5	Leg. N=16	Lob. N=10
MEA	93	93	100	94	100	59	64	40	75	90
MSBA	79	93	100	50	90	41	36	40	25	40
MFT	52	64	80	50	80	3	0	20	19	20

*Since some respondents named more than one group, the percentages do not always add up to one hundred.

As described by lobbyists, the "Big Three" of the school interest groups employed different means in their attempts to influence legislation. The teacher organizations had the most diverse and powerful resources to bring to bear on the process. The MEA through its research staff (two persons) and lobbyists (two full-time) supplied lawmakers with information and policy advice. Additionally, a statewide communications network had been created so that MEA locals could stay abreast of legislative developments and contact lawmakers as to teacher desires. That these desires carried weight was ensured by the large MEA membership (a reported total of 45,000 in 1979), its extensive local organization, and the Association's willingness to furnish both workers and money to candidates for the legislature.

While the MEA for years had encouraged teachers to become individually active in politics, it did not have a "political action" arm until 1968 when the Independent Minnesota Political Action Committee (IMPACE) was formed. In the 1970 election, IMPACE distributed $17,000 to selected candidates. Two years later these campaign contributions exceeded $80,000. By the close of the decade, IMPACE was spending over $100,000 (a reported $112,957 in 1978) in its biennial efforts to influence the outcome of elections.[12] Its reported contributions to electoral campaigns had become among the state's highest. As summed up by one long-time observer, the MEA's influence was a "combination of a significant political war chest and a very, very effective political network." "And on top of that," this observer added, "Don Hill [President of MEA]...is the most charismatic leader I've ever seen in the educational arena."[13]

Through its Committee on Public Education (COPE) the MFT also backed legislative candidates and had for many years. Although its expenditures as an individual organization were modest (a reported $35,000 in 1978) compared with MEA, the Federation was a part of the broader Minnesota AFL-CIO, whose reported campaign contributions were among the largest in the state (a reported $121,300 in 1978).[14] The membership of MFT (estimated at 17,000 in 1979) was also substantially smaller than MEA's. Still, the Federation historically had represented teachers in such strong union areas as the big cities and the Iron Range, and in 1977 and again in 1979 had successfully challenged the Association in a number of school districts.

Like the other school interest groups, MFT maintained a lobbying force (one full-time person and two "helpers") in the capitol. This force was made much more potent by the Federation's affiliation with the AFL-CIO, an affiliation that particularly enhanced MFT's access to DFL governors and legislative leaders. As one MFT leader put it: "We are the official branch for teachers within that movement. This means that we can call upon labor people through convention resolution, or directly through lobbyists. This is the biggest force." In assessing its group's strength, MFT lobbyists, like their MEA counterparts, also noted the growth of teachers as an occupational group within the Minnesota legislature. In the 1979 House of Representatives, for example, there were 22 members who listed their primary employment as "educators," the largest of any occupational group.[15]

The legislative influence of MSBA, according to lobbyists, had several sources. The first was the ability to project the effects a proposed bill would have on local school districts. To do this, the MSBA maintained a small research staff and one full-time, as well as several part-time, lobbyists. The second source of influence stemmed from the status of Association members. Not only could MSBA claim to speak for local officials and taxpayers, its members often were a part of the informal power structure in their communities, especially in outstate Minnesota. And, in the opinion of one close observer, "local school superintendents were part of that MSBA net." Thus, the school boards group had influential members in every part of the state and could draw upon this formidable organization network. On a threatening issue like school district consolidation, the MSBA could and did deluge key legislators with letters, phone calls, and members visits of such magnitude to give the appearance of a local uprising against state direction.

Legislator respondents also were asked to identify the means of influence used by the school groups that they rated as having the most impact on education legislation. Perceptions for the MEA, MSBA, and MFT are reported in Table 4. These assessments were pretty much in accord with those offered by the lobbyists. The legislators' view of the teacher groups relying on resources that translated into votes was evident in both the 1973 and 1979 responses. Still, the emphasis was somewhat different. In the earlier study, membership size and campaign contributions were pointed to most frequently; by the end of the decade the statewide

TABLE 4

INFLUENCE RESOURCES OF SCHOOL GROUPS AS PERCEIVED BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

Influence Resource*	Legislative Leaders Frequency of Mention for					
	MEA		MSBA		MFT	
	1973 N=11	1979 N=10	1973 N=10	1979 N=6	1973 N=7	1979 N=5
Size of membership	10	6	0	2	4	3
Social status of members	2	0	9	3	0	0
Campaign contributions	9	5	0	0	4	1
Lobbying activity	4	9	3	4	2	2
Source of information	2	1	4	2	0	1
Grassroots organization	5	6	0	4	0	3
Affiliation with Labor	0	0	0	0	5	2

*Coded from open-ended question; not all legislators answered for each group.

local orgaization of teachers, as well as school boards, seemed most to impress legislative leaders. Along with this, the MEA was most frequently cited as mounting an unusually strong lobbying effort in the capitol.

Information is the general strategy relied upon by all interest groups to gain influence. Whatever else may be necessary for success, the sine qua non of lobbying effectiveness is the ability to supply relevant, reliable, and readable information to lawmakers. But the "Big Three" was noteworthy among the public school groups for supplementing this ability with the strategy of "constituency influence and pressure."[16] This strategic approach employs indirect influence in which an organization activates rank-and-file members and influential constituents so that they seek to elect or to lobby legislators, with such constituent activity being seen as a prerequisite for overall group effectiveness. Along with teachers and school boards, administrators were also doing more of this by 1979. The lobbyist respondents for the Secondary Principals Association and for MASA each reported that their organization had formed independent political action arms to make selective campaign contributions.

The impact of campaign money on the policymaking process has long been debated. Lawmakers need money to get elected and they take it in large amounts from prospective beneficiaries of policy decisions. Yet how much campaign money actually buys in the coin of legislative influence is not easy to determine. It is known that when legislators and lobbyists are asked to rate various lobbying tactics, "contributing money" is never ranked very high. Such, too, was the case in Minnesota where Sullivan, in her study of K-12 education lobbyists, employed this kind of rating scale.[17] Both her legislator and lobbyists interviewees were asked to rate the relative effectiveness of 13 commonly used techniques on a 0-10 scale. These techniques in rank order of effectiveness are presented in Table 5. The average (mean) scores for each group of respondents also are shown.

As can be seen in Table 5, the assessments by lobbyists and legislators in the Sullivan study produced nearly identical rank orders, though the ratings by the latter were slightly higher on most techniques. Consistent with previous research, the technique "contribution of political money" was given very low effectiveness scores by both lobbyists and legislators. And rated even lower was the social approach to gaining influence: "entertaining" and "giving a party" for legislators. In marked contrast were the very high ratings given to "personal presentation of arguments" and having a legislator being "contact(ed) by constituents," with these two techniques being the only ones rated as a seven or more by both groups of respondents.

Data like that produced by Sullivan's research do cast doubt on the popular imagery linking lobbyists to money to legislation, but they are not wholly persuasive. Participant ratings, such as those she used, reflect norms and rationalizations as well as power realities; case studies of legislative policymaking often attribute influence to pressure tactics, including those rooted in the capacity to give or withhold campaign contributions.

TABLE 5

LOBBYIST AND LEGISLATOR AVERAGE (MEAN) RATINGS OF LOBBYING TECHNIQUES

Technique	Lobbyist Rating (N=22)	Legislator Rating (N=11)
Personal Presentation of Arguments	8.2	8.1
Contact by Constituents	7.5	7.7
Presenting Research Results	6.3	7.7
Testifying at Hearings	6.3	6.5
Assistance from Other Organizations	6.3	---
Contact by Close Friend	5.0	5.9
Letter or Telegram Campaign	4.5	5.2
Campaign Work	3.9	5.0
Public Relations Campaign	3.8	3.8
Publicizing Voting Record	2.4	2.9
Contribution of Political Money	1.9	2.5
Entertaining for an Evening	1.1	1.3
Giving a Party	.5	1.1

Constraints on the Legislative Role of the Department of Education

Interest Group Relationships

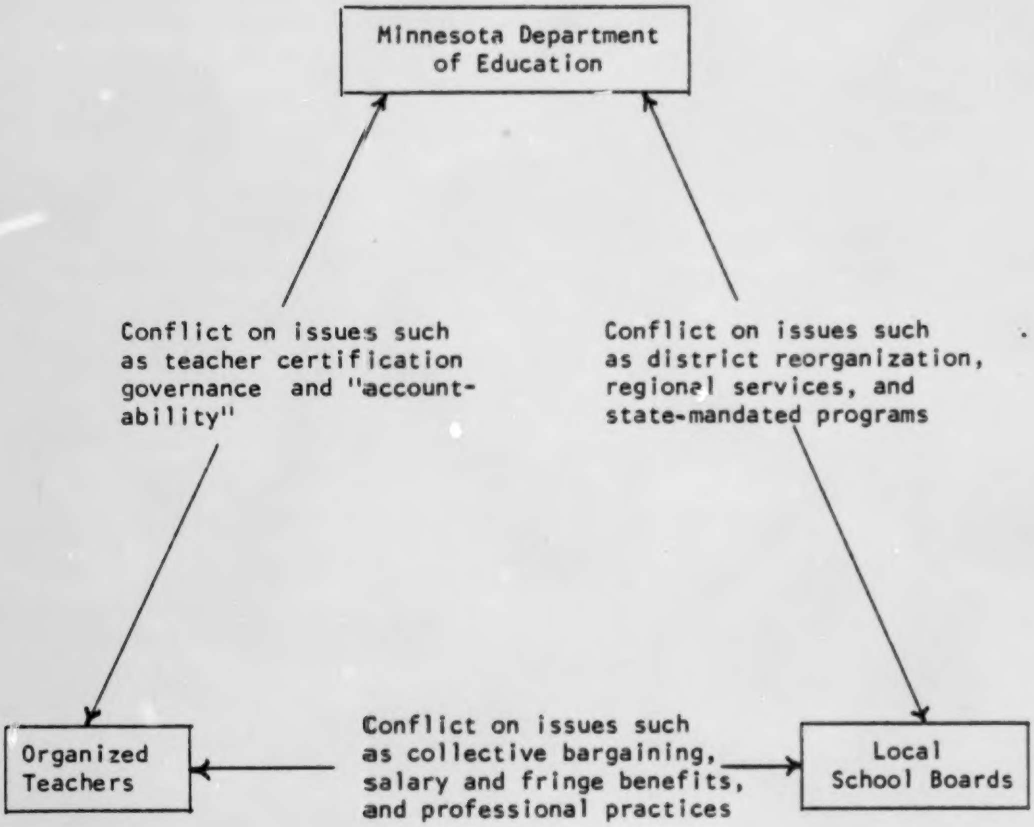
The fragmentation of the public school lobby, and the emergence of organized teachers as an independent political force, constrained the legislative role of the Minnesota Department of Education. No longer did the main educator groups work harmoniously with the Department, and one another, in pushing for new legislation. Instead, with the dissolution of the old public school coalition, the Department became the object of cross-pressures from educator groups. Policymaking relationships, notably with the powerful teacher organizations, sometimes were minimal and occasionally were marked by open conflict.

As one '73 respondent observed, the Department had become caught "in the middle between contending groups." From his perspective, the Department was centrally involved in a triangular struggle to control Minnesota schools, a struggle that had two basic dimensions of conflict: state government versus local districts, and professional educators versus lay citizens. (See Figure 2.)

Department respondents in both 1973 and 1979 conceded that their attempts to unify educator support behind important school legislation had met only partial success. Though one respondent in the earlier period did argue that the Department had made many such efforts, he noted that "there was no continuity of support among educational groups." And another '73 interviewee saw the Department as making "no attempt to pull

FIGURE 2

THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OVER SCHOOLS:
A DEPARTMENT PERSPECTIVE (1973)


Minnesota Department of Education
Conflict on issues such as teacher certification governance and "accountability"
Conflict on issues such as district reorganization, regional services, and state-mandated programs
Organized Teachers
Conflict on issues such as collective bargaining, salary and fringe benefits, and professional practices
Local School Boards

the educational interest groups together." Each of these groups had its own legislative resources and goals; this, in his opinion, was a basic political fact that the Department could do little to change. The conclusion of '79 Department respondents was that the development of unified educator support depended largely on the issue. Gifted and talented student legislation was identified as an issue where such support was present. But on issues that deeply and divisively affected educational group interests--for example, targeting special funds to the K-3 grades--there was no prospect that Department leadership, even if forthcoming, could have created a united front.

Questions about the policymaking relationships of the Department of Education produced divergent answers from education lobbyist respondents, answers that reflected the organizational affiliations of these respondents. Most such respondents in 1973 and 1979 spoke of their relationships with the Department in generally positive terms, and assessed the Commissioner of Education, Howard Casmey, as having taken an appropriate policy leadership role. This was notably true of interviewees from the school boards and administrator organizations. These lobbyists, while citing points of friction over fiscal and reporting requirements of state-mandated programs, viewed their organizations as sharing a broad area of policy agreement with the Commissioner, as being "usually" consulted by the Department in its policy formulation process, and as having their advice make a substantial difference in the final proposals that were adopted. Local school superintendents and their organization (MASA) were widely perceived as having especially good access to the Department. These administrators, it might be added, along with nearly all the educator organizations, gave Commissioner Casmey effective support when put to the test, this test being the Commissioner's reappointment toward the close of the decade to serve a third term.

Not all lobbyist assessments of the policy role of the Department of Education were positive. Several respondents, particularly from the teacher organizations, were quite critical in 1973; they remained critical in 1979. The Department, in their estimation, lacked policy leadership and political influence. Moreover, it had come into open conflict with teachers over such legislative issues as the state governance of certification. The MEA, apparently, had no desire for any close working relationship with the Department. The MFT respondents voiced some of the same sentiments as their MEA counterparts, but the Federation did seem to want more "input" into Department decisions.

Legislative Relationships

Constraints on the legislative role of the Department of Education came, of course, from sources other than the educator organizations. Even more fundamental were those originating with the Minnesota legislature, a body that had become increasingly assertive in the area of state school policymaking, and that had developed the staff capability to counter Department expertise.

Top Department administrators did perceive their legislative relationships as improving in the 1970s. Seen as contributing to this improvement were the continuity in Department and legislative leadership positions; the development of a "trust" relationship between Commissioner Casmey and several key legislators; the enhanced information-generating capability of the Department; and the professional skills of top Department administrators, making it possible for the Commissioner to delegate much of the responsibility for legislative communications. These factors, plus much "hard work," were viewed as giving the Department of Education a greater voice in school policy legislation.

Education lobbyists and several '79 legislator respondents also noted improvement in the Department's status with the legislature. They emphasized, however, the school finance expertness, policymaking knowledge, and political connections of a Deputy Commissioner, Joseph Graba. A former legislator who had served as chairman of the School Aids Division of the House, Graba had gained widespread respect among both influential legislators and school officials. And when he resigned, just prior to the '79 session, the Department of Education was seen by many '79 respondents as being seriously hurt in its legislative efforts. One result, probably, was that assessments by legislator leaders of the Department's legislative effectiveness (see Table 6) were no more positive overall in 1979 than they had been in 1973, with negative sentiments being most frequently expressed by DFL Senators.

TABLE 6

LEGISLATOR RATINGS OF COMMISSIONER'S LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS, STRENGTH OF OPPOSITION, AND UTILITY OF DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

Question /Response Categories	Legislative Leaders		'79 Legislators Only			
			DFL		I-R	
	1973	1979	H	S	H	S
"How successful have the Commissioner and his staff been in getting their proposals enacted by the Legislature?"						
"Almost always..."	0	1	0	0	0	1
"Most of the time..."	8	8	2	1	4	1
"About half..."	2	2	0	1	1	0
"Less than half..."	2	3	0	2	0	1
"Unsuccessful..."	1	1	0	1	0	0
"In meeting your needs in deciding upon education and school finance bills, how would you rate the information from the Department of Education?"						
"Almost always..."	5	3	0	0	1	2
"Usually..."	5	7	3	1	3	0
"Sometimes..."	4	3	0	2	1	0
"Almost never..."	0	3	0	2	0	1
"If the Commissioner is strongly opposed to an education bill, are its chances of passage in the Legislature greatly diminished?"						
"Yes"	3	6	2	2	1	1
"No"	3	6	1	2	2	1

The Commissioner's policy advocacy effectiveness drew differing evaluations from '79 legislator respondents. Most seemed to attribute moderate legislative influence to the efforts of Commissioner Casmey and his staff. In the words of one lawmaker, the Commissioner exerted considerable "nonpartisan clout;" another was more eloquent: "The Commissioner is the mirror of concern on educational issues for the people in this state." Nearly all respondents agreed that the ability to supply useful information to legislators and their staffs was Casmey's main influence resource . Even so, there were several respondents in the Senate who strongly questioned the Commissioner's policy leadership. "He is in front of the parade but he is not leading it," said one DFL Senator. Another depicted the Department of Education as a "strange department...one that simply reacted to major issues." But still another thought the Commissioner could exercise no "real" power because "the legislature is pretty damn independent." As this legislator, and many other respondents saw it, the most fundamental constraint on the influence of the Department of Education was to be found in the independence and power of the legislature itself. This, in their view, was the political reality with which the Commissioner, Department and all other external forces had to contend.

Governor Relationships

A final set of constraints (and opportunities) that shaped the legislative role of the Department of Education grew out of the relationship between its top administrators, notably the Commissioner, and the governor's office. These relationships fluctuated markedly throughout the decade, a reflection primarily of the politics, personality, and philosophy of three governors: DFLer Wendell Anderson (1971-1976), DFLer Rudy Perpich (1976-1978), and I-Rer Albert Quie (1979-).

Governor Anderson's relationships with the Department of Education were not marked, as of 1973, by much rapport. Several factors contributed to this situation. First, the data furnished by the Department were not seen as having much utility by the governor's office. Although Department administrators insisted they always made "the facts" available, aides to Governor Anderson maintained that these data often had to be supplemented, categorized, or summarized before they had policy relevance. Second, the Department was seen by the governor's office as treating school finance in isolation from broader tax and fiscal considerations, as having too much of an educator's viewpoint. Third, the Department was seen as being partial to the Republican philosophy and as being closely linked to legislators of that party (i.e., the Conservative Caucus). Commissioner Casmey had been appointed in 1970 before Anderson took office. Despite sharing the Governor's concern for equalization, he "was not the Governor's man politically." The result of all this was that Governor Anderson relied heavily for school finance policy advice on his own staff, the State Planning Agency, and political confidants.

Department administrators interviewed in 1973 rated the status of the Commissioner as a source of advice and ideas for Governor Anderson higher than did other respondents (see Table 7). In justifying these ratings, the administrators mentioned the Commissioner's personal access,

TABLE 7

RATINGS OF THE COMMISSIONER AS A SOURCE OF IDEAS AND ADVICE FOR THE GOVERNOR

Question/Response Categories	1973 Responses Dept. Admin. (N=2)	1973 Responses Gov. Aides (N=2)	1973 Responses Educ. Lobbyists (N=4)	1979 Responses Dept. Admin. (N=2)	1979 Responses Gov. Aides (N=2)	1979 Responses Educ. Lobbyists N=12)
"Compared to other sources of ideas and advice available to the Governor, how important is the Commissioner?"						
"Most important..."	1	0	0	0	0	0
"Among most important..."	1	1	2	2	2	7
"Relatively minor..."	0	1	2	0	0	3
"Not important..."	0	0	0	0	0	2

ability to supply information, influence with Governor-appointed State Board members, objective approach toward policymaking, and standing with the "education constituency." The school lobbyist respondents who evaluated the Commissioner as being just a "minor source" for Anderson attributed this weakness primarily to political reasons, contending that Commissioner Casmey sometimes took public positions which were "politically embarrassing" to Anderson, and that the Governor did not relate to Casmey as "a person he could trust politically."

Governor Rudy Perpich, Anderson's successor, was publicly critical of the Department, especially with respect to management efficiency, though he did have Casmey as a member of his cabinet and did approve the State Board's reappointment of the Commissioner. But the Department did establish excellent policy access to Governor Perpich through Deputy Commissioner Graba. And if Perpich had been elected in 1978, the Department of Education in the person of Joseph Graba would have probably become the Governor's main policy counsel, at least on the crucial school finance issues.

The election of Albert Quie as Minnesota Governor in 1978 provided the Commissioner and Department yet another opportunity for expanded policy influence. At the outset, however, it appeared that this influence would be small indeed. Graba resigned, concerned that he would find himself at odds with Quie's school finance emphasis; the new Governor rejected Department policy proposals in favor of his own K-3 initiative; and the Commissioner was not called upon by Quie to promote this plan, which became a major legislative issue in the 1979 session. "It wasn't our program," explained one Department respondent, "we only provided data on request. The Governor used the State Planning Agency to develop the proposal."

Notwithstanding such an inauspicious beginning, relationships between the Department and governor's office were quite cordial and cooperative by the time of our interviews, following the legislative session. As can be seen from Table 7, both the top Department administrators and Governor Quie's aide, along with a majority of the school lobbyists, agreed that the Commissioner was "among the most important" sources of ideas and advice for the Governor. As one phrased it, the Commissioner had "access to decision makers--people do listen to him." Five reasons were suggested for this positive relationship. The first was the importance of education in Minnesotans, with school aids being the largest single item in the state budget. The second was the receptivity of Governor Quie to education policy innovations. Quie was considered by many respondents to have an unusually strong and genuine interest in education reform, though not always having the political muscle to match this interest. The third was the capacity of the Department to furnish policy-relevant data. The Commissioner, in the judgement of one Quie aide, had "clout on certain issues" when he had a "corner" on the necessary information and analysis. The fourth was the credibility of the Commissioner to speak for education, especially for local school superintendents. A final reason for Commissioner Casmey's influence with the Governor were the personal efforts made by Casmey and a Deputy Commissioner, Von Valletta, to improve the standing of the Department in the governor's office, efforts that apparently met with considerable success.

Policy Initiation from the Education Agency Arena

The legislature is not the only arena where state policy for Minnesota schools is decided. Another such arena is the education agency, specifically its governing body, the State Board of Education, and its chief executive, the Commissioner of Education.

Governing Authority

Like forty-nine other states, the structure for educational governance in Minnesota included in 1979 a State Board of Education. The nine members of this body were appointed by the governor. These appointments were confirmed by the Senate, were for overlapping terms of four years, and were designed to ensure representation from each congressional district in the state. (There was one at-large member.) Furthermore, at least three of these officials had to have served on local school boards.

The formal powers of the State Board of Education were not derived from the Minnesota Constitution; no reference was made to such a body in that document. Rather, its powers were statutory. In addition to sharing in the appointment of the Commissioner of Education, the State Board had the authority within the framework of constitutional stipulations and legislative enactments to determine policies and exercise general supervision for the public schools.[18] In enacting its "rules and regulations," the State Board among other legal steps had to hold hearings before an examiner prior to final adoption. Such decisions had the full force of law unless overturned by the legislature or the courts.

Although the Minnesota State Board of Education was granted broad authority to set policy in many educational areas, its quasi-legislative power did not include direct access to state fiscal resources. The legislature and the governor made the tax decisions, established the level of school appropriations, and decided all the basic features of the distribution formula. Fiscal policy for education was outside the legal purview of the State Board.

The limited authority of the Minnesota Board was not the only structural factor that constricted its role in education policymaking. Like officials on other lay governing bodies, the members of the State Board served on a part-time basis. Statutes specified a date (first Tuesday in August) for the annual meeting, and required that quarterly meetings be held. Special meetings also could be called when deemed necessary by the State Board. The result of law, along with Board member preference, were regular meetings occurring at least once a month. Compensation for this service was minimal, consisting of $35.00 per working day plus actual expenses. Finally, the State Board had no personal staff to supply information and advice on agenda items. For these, it largely relied on the Commissioner of Education and the Department of Education staff.

Leadership Assessments

In its 1972 study on "Accountability in Schools," the Citizens League concluded that policy leadership had not been the traditional posture for the State Board and the Commissioner of Education:

> The Commissioner and State Board of Education have used their authority primarily to insure that minimum educational inputs are provided. Although the Legislature has given them rather broad power to interpret the statutory provisions regulating the public school system in the state, and to formulate rules and regulations to enforce them...we learned that traditionally they have not opted to exercise the full range of their authority to decide education policy.[19]

Whatever the truth of this observation for an earlier period, many of our 1973 respondents could point to issues on which the State Board or Commissioner had assumed policy direction, including educational assessment, regional services, and school desegregation. The last was a highly visible issue and State Board activism received much comment from '73 respondents. Indeed, this activism could appropriately be cited as a "model" for board members in other states; for the Minnesota State Board in enacting desegregation policy had well exemplified five "requisites of board leadership:"

> 1. Minnesota board members displayed political courage in facing up to a volatile and abrasive issue. From their perspective, school segregation was legally suspect, educationally harmful, and morally wrong. And they had the courage, in spite of considerable 'flak,' to act on their convictions.
>
> 2. Minnesota board members seized the policy initiative. Rather than being pressured into a reactive posture, the Board got out in front early and thereby retained control over the issue.
>
> 3. Minnesota board members became personally informed on the subject of desegregation, consulting outside experts as well as department sources, and the Board was able to give active direction to the decision process.

4. Minnesota board members were not doctrinaire; they were willing to strike compromises in order to mobilize public support. They did retain the vital elements of the desegregation policy, at least as it pertained to racial imbalance.

5. Minnesota board members worked in harmony with department administrators on the issue. A team relationship evolved among the policy participants, with the Commissioner and his staff not only being a source of information and a 'good conscience' for the Board, but also being forceful public advocates of the desegregation thrust.[20]

No such clearcut example of Board or Commissioner leadership was identified by '79 respondents. Some did note emphasis on such issues as women's equity, Indian education, bilingual instruction, and computer-based learning (PLATO), the last being energetically championed by Commissioner Casmey. But a more common perception--one that seemed to underlie many responses--was that policymaking initiative had shifted in the 1970s from the education agency to the general governance institutions, the legislature and governor's office. And these institutions were seen as being influenced by a variety of competing individuals and groups, with the lawmakers themselves taking directive roles. In such a power milieu, the education agency had to run increasingly hard just to stay even. In this effort, however, the State Board, and particularly the Commissioner, were not without personal and institutional resources.

Board Member Recruitment and Relationships

In Minnesota, State Board selection involved appointment by the governor and confirmation by the Senate. Informal influence in this process was perceived as being exercised mainly by members of the governor's staff, by party officials at the Congressional district level, and by legislative leaders (see Table 8). Significantly, however, though partisanship and political figures were central to recruitment for the State Board, once seats had been taken on that body such considerations receded to the background. Observers, as well as Board members, concurred that these officials did not take "political sides on issues." Nor were there close relationships between the State Board and the governor's office. Typically, "the governor took a hands-off policy once he made Board appointments." The other side of the coin was that the State Board usually had little policy influence with the governor.

State Board respondents in 1979 expressed much optimism about creating a positive relationship with Governor Quie. And one Department respondent strongly agreed with this prediction, saying in effect:

> Wendell Anderson seldom conferred with board members, even though he appointed many. He did not trust the Department, giving attention mainly to his own staff's recommendations. Rudy Perpich never conferred with board members, he did not appoint many. Governor Quie already is conferring with his appointees. He has had several luncheon sessions with the entire board, has elicited their opinions, and has instructed his staff to attend their meetings.

Most Board member respondents in 1979 saw themselves as working through meetings and other personal contacts with Governor Quie. "What we say will get to him," said one. Yet nearly all also noted a reliance on the Commissioner and his staff to maintain ongoing relationships with the governor's office. And there were other perceptions that did not suggest much Board influence with the Governor:

TABLE 8

PERCEPTION OF INFORMAL INFLUENCE IN STATE BOARD RECRUITMENT

Individual/Group	Frequency of Mention by Members of State Board, State Department, Governor's Staff*					
	Very Influential		Somewhat Influential		Not Influential	
	73	79	73	79	73	79
Current Board Member	0	0	4	6	3	6
Commissioner of Education	0	0	3	7	4	5
Teacher Associations	0	1	2	5	5	4
Administrator Associations	0	0	2	5	5	6
Governor's Staff	7	7	1	4	0	1
Legislators	5	3	0	8	2	1
Party Leaders	7	6	1	5	0	1
Local Board Members	0	3	2	4	5	5

* 8 respondents in '73 (Board--5, Department--2, and Staff--1).
12 respondents in '79 (Board--9, Department--2, and Staff--1).
Not all respondents answered each question, and one emphasized individuals "trusted by the Governor" who were not necessarily in any of the above roles.

1. Only two Board member respondents rated themselves as having a "close" relationship with the governor's office, a reflection in part of party differences.
2. No Board member respondent, or any other respondent, saw the Board as being involved with Governor Quie's main 1979 legislative issues, notably the K-3 proposal. Several Board members expressed concern that they were not asked: "We could have helped," said one.
3. Finally, several respondents outside the Board noted the Governor's push for a Task Force on Educational Policy, and they speculated in a negative vein on what this implied for the future policy initiation role of the State Board of Education.

The State Board in the 1960s had gained the reputation of being Republican and rural in its makeup. But these attributes did not characterize the Board in the next decade. Governor Anderson's appointments created a DFL majority, a majority that endured through the seventies. As of 1979, three Board members were from Minnesota's big cities, two other members resided in Twin Cities suburbs, and two more were from smaller cities in the state. Whether these affiliations made much difference in Board decision-making was disagreed upon by its members (see Table 9). Three of the six '73 respondents denied that either they or their colleagues spoke for particular geographic regions. Yet the other three maintained that nearly all members did represent such regions. The 1979 responses also indicated that such geography-based representation was perceived for some board members; additionally, "a few" were widely seen as speaking for such constituencies as Indians and women.

TABLE 9

DECISION-MAKING AGREEMENT AMONG STATE BOARD MEMBERS

Question/Response Categories	Board Responses 1973 (N=6)	Board Responses 1979 (N=9)
"Are there members who believe they should be the representatives on the Board for particular sections or racial-ethnic groups in the state?"		
"No (none)"	50%	11%
"Just a few"	0%	56%
"Most"	0%	0%
"All"	50%	33%
"Which one describes agreement on the Board when it must decide a major policy issue?"		
"Is harmonious, little serious disagreement"	0%	22%
"Usually agreement, but members who sometimes dissent"	100%	67%
"Divides into rival factions of equal strength"	0%	0%
"Divides into factions but clear working majority"	0%	0%
"Often divided but division depends on issue"	0%	11%

Despite differences in regional attachment--as well as in philosophy, partisanship, and other such characteristics--the Board never split into majority and minority factions during the 1970s, nor was it ever subject to frequent issue-specific divisions. Board member interviewees in 1979 as well as 1973 (again see Table 9) declared that they were "usually in agreement" when a major policy question was being resolved. Other observers corroborated this description. As pictured by Board members and Department administrators, there was usually discussion and sometimes disagreement before votes were taken ("We hashed things out," commented one official), but this was always accompanied by a strong desire to reach consensus on final decisions.

A combination of factors encouraged a consensual approach. Board members were similar in social background. They did not have political constituencies. There were informal norms approving of being "flexible and open-minded" and repudiating the representation of "special interests," along with "a strong desire for harmony, civility, and courtesy." Also, the State Board largely operated from a common information base. Finally, as one respondent analyzed it, Board members may not have always given "serious consideration to the issues;" thus, they were more easily able to maintain a consensual approach. In this connection, a close observer argued that the State Board avoided controversial policy areas not only because these officials were "swamped by legal requirements," but also because legislators and governors wanted the Board to be preoccupied with "trivia," except when there was political flak to catch on a hot issue like school desegregation.

Policymaking Resources

State Board members, apart from their formal authority to enact decisions, had few resources of their own with which to initiate education policies. Whatever their leadership intentions they had to rely heavily on the Department of Education. As is reported in Table 10, service on the State Board was undertaken on a part-time basis (most Board member respondents estimated that they spent four to six days a month on Board work); meeting agendas were not only lengthy, they were crowded with routine matters (but most Board member respondents indicated that only one-quarter of an average meeting was devoted to the "legal approval" of such matters). Board agendas were not prepared by its members, but by the Commissioner and his staff. And Board members depended on the Department for most of their information on the agenda items.

Of the six Board members interviewed in 1973, three implied that they had no data source other than the Department of Education, and the others mentioned only materials coming from one of the major educational organizations. Several Board members did insist, though, that they often urged the Department to provide more detailed information than it initially supplied. A somewhat broader array of information sources was identified by Board member respondents in 1979, with a surprising four of nine indicating the use of national publications. Nearly all Board members said that the information made available to them by the Department of Education either "almost always" or "usually" met their needs. These replies are shown in Table 10, along with the sources of information identified by respondents.

TABLE 10

BOARD MEMBER POLICY RESOURCES

	Board Responses	
Item/Response Categories	1973 (N=6)	1979 (N=9)
Time Spent on Board Work per Month		
"Less than day"	0%	0%
"Day or so"	0%	0%
"2-3 days"	17%	22%
"4-6 days"	67%	67%
"Week or more"	17%	11%
Time Devoted to "Legal Approval" of Routine Items		
"Almost all"	0%	11%
"About three-quarters"	17%	0%
"About half"	17%	0%
"About one-quarter"	50%	56%
"Almost none"	17%	33%
Information Sources for Agenda Items*		
CSSO/Department of Education	100%	100%
Other sources (total)	50%	78%
Women's groups	0%	11%
ECSUs	0%	11%
Local parents/citizens	0%	22%
Legislative staff	0%	11%
Governor's office	0%	11%
National publications	0%	44%
Teachers associations	34%	0%
Other educational associations	34%	0%
Ratings of Department of Education Information		
"Almost always meets needs"	34%	44%
"Usually meets needs"	50%	44%
"Sometimes meets needs"	16%	11%
"Almost never meets needs"	0%	0%

*Coded from responses to open-ended question.

Whatever the policy resources available to a state board of education, the most crucial are those found in the department that it governs and in its chief executive officer. The key figure in the education agency arena is always the person who heads the Department of Education, and in Minnesota this meant for nearly the entire decade of the seventies the Commissioner of Education, Howard Casmey.

The Commissioner of Education served as the secretary and chief executive officer of the State Board of Education, and the administrative head of the Department of Education. Selected by the State Board--subject to approval by the governor (after 1977)--and confirmed by the Senate, the Commissioner served for four-year terms. Formal responsibilities included making reports and recommendations to the State Board, and organizing and controlling the operations of the Department of Education. Also, the Commissioner, along with the State Board, supervised the implementation of all laws and other policies relating to the public schools.

Along with the formal powers of office, the Commissioner's status as an educational expert, position at the apex of a large state agency, and control of technical information put him in a pivotal role with respect to school policymaking. To examine the policy expectations held by State Board members for the Commissioner, a number of statements were included in both the structured interviews and the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with each statement. Their reactions to ten of these statements are presented in Table 11.

The data in Table 11 reveal, first, much agreement among Board members in their policy role expectations for the Commissioner of Education. On just a few items did more than one or two Board members dissent from the majority. There was only one statement on which the '73 Board member respondents split down the middle, this being on whether the Commissioner should become involved in the recruitment process for the State Board. (In 1979 this involvement was rejected by six of the nine respondents.) Second, Board members emphatically rejected the classic policy-administration dichotomy and indicated that they wanted their Commissioner to be a major policy participant. In relationships with other actors, including the State Board, the Commissioner was expected by Board members to be an innovator, formulator, advocate, and influential in the determination of school policy. Only with respect to working with "party leaders" did Board respondents express serious doubts, and by 1979 a majority of respondents also agreed with this expectation. Third, Board member expectations were quite stable over time. The party leader question was the one item where there was a shift in majority sentiment between 1973 and 1979. Fourth, the Commissioner was also asked to respond to this set of statements; his agree-disagree responses were identical to the Board majority on nine of ten items in 1973 and all ten items in 1979. Clearly, then, there was much consensus among Minnesota State Board members, and between these members and Commissioner Casmey, on the desirability of a policy leadership role for the Commissioner of Education. The expectations portrait, which emerges from the data in Table 11, is that of a strong policy-oriented executive, one who is expected to exert influence across a broad spectrum of relevant actors.

TABLE 11

POLICY ROLE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION HELD BY MEMBERS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Statements	1973 (N=6) Agree	1973 (N=6) Disagree	1979 (N=9)* Agree	1979 (N=9)* Disagree
1. "A State Commissioner should assume leadership in shaping the policies enacted by the State Board of Education."	5	1	7	2
2. "The responsibility of the State Board of Education should include supervision over the activities of the State Commissioner."	5	1	7	0
3. "A State Commissioner should work to have respected people become members of the State Board of Education."	3	3	3	6
4. "A State Commissioner should be the principal advocate of major changes in state education policy."	4	2	7	2
5. "A State Commissioner should maintain a neutral stand on education policy issues that are very controversial among the citizens of the state."	1	5	1	8
6. "A State Commissioner should take a policy position even when most professional educators may be hostile."	6	0	8	1
7. "A State Commissioner should actively seek to influence legislative leaders with regard to education policies."	6	0	9	0
8. "The State Commissioner should be the principal advisor of the governor on school policy matters."	4	2	6	1
9. "A State Commissioner should actively work with party leaders in order to attain education policy goals."	1	5	5	4
10. "A State Commissioner should actively seek to influence federal legislation that affects public education in the state."	5	1	9	0

*Only 7 respondents answered the questionnaire items for numbers 2 and 8.

Relationships between the Department of Education and school interest groups, legislative leaders, and governor's office were discussed earlier in this section. There it was emphasized that a powerful confluence of political forces in the 1970s significantly constrained the leadership role of the Department. But Commissioner Casmey, with the full support of the State Board, did undertake such a role, the contents and results of which produced differing assessments from our respondents in both 1973 and 1979. Most credited the Commissioner with often taking advanced public positions on equal opportunity issues and on issues involving the use of computer technology in schools, and with always being an energetic and effective advocate for education in the state. Several respondents pointed to major policy areas--for example, racial desegregation, regional services, and statewide assessment--where they attributed the original push for change to the Commissioner or Department. But other respondents were not so laudatory. In their view, "leadership" was simply not a word that described the Department of Education.

Several prominent DFL Senators made their "reservations" publicly known in 1978 during the controversy over Casmey's reconfirmation. Some of their criticisms were directed at specific concerns--Casmey's supposed insensitivity to private school needs and his alleged lack of progress on affirmative action for women (charges that Casmey vigorously denied)--but many of the complaints were about the Commissioner's "leadership performance." Senator Gene Merriam, Chairman of the influential Education Aids Subcommittee, declared that if the Commissioner job was to be "an advocate and cheerleader that would be fine. But I've never seen him take a leadership position on anything." When, however, the reconfirmation decision came, Commissioner Casmey with the unanimous support of the State Board, plus the backing of the Governor, most educator groups, local superintendents, and key Senators, was successful by a vote of 43-8. And, again, in 1979, when the issue was back before the Senate, Casmey was reconfirmed for a term lasting until 1983, despite 17 dissenting votes.

However tenuous the Commissioner's policy influence was at times in the legislature and governor's office, no such difficulties were present in his relationships with the State Board of Education (see Table 12). Typically, policymaking relationships between Commissioner Casmey and the State Board were collegial and supportive. All '73 respondents agreed there was no opposition bloc to the Commissioner on the State Board. Rather, their comments indicated little conflict between the two, though the Commissioner's push for a regional service agency (MESA) early in his tenure had placed him on occasions in opposition to the Board majority. Such differences as did exist were usually resolved before the Board came together in formal meetings.

The pattern of public consensus endured through the 1970s. But two Board member respondents in 1979 did suggest an undercurrent of opposition to the Commissioner. "A few board members" were identified by these respondents as being "philosophically" at odds with Casmey. And there were instances when these disagreements surfaced publicly at Board meetings. Still, most '79 Board respondents did not interpret these conflicts as sutained opposition; their comments pointed to the likelihood of continued majority support for the Commissioner's policy leadership.

TABLE 12

POLICYMAKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE BOARD AND THE COMMISSIONER

Question/Response Categories	Respondents	Responses	
		1973	1979
"Are there Board members who frequently oppose the Commissioner on major policy issues?"	Board Members		
"Yes"	1973 N=6	0%	22%
"No"	1979 N=9	100%	78%
"How often does the Commissioner take ideas/suggestions from Board members and develop these into policy?"			
"Often"	Board	50%	67%
"Sometimes"	Members	50%	22%
"Rarely"	1973 N=6	0%	11%
"Never"	1979 N=9	0%	0%
"Does the State Board give real direction to the Commissioner or just formalize his recommendations?"	Educ. Lobbyists		
"Real direction"	1973 N=4	50%	56%
"Just formalize"	1979 N=9	50%	44%

The approach used by Commissioner Casmey in formulating major policy proposals, as portrayed by the Commissioner and most Board respondents in 1979, was to outline or "test" his ideas with some individual Board members, with the appropriate Board standing committee, and/or with the entire Board. Then, incorporating many of the suggestions that he had received, the Commissioner had Department administrators and their staff personnel develop detailed policy proposals for final Board action. As seen by Board members, Casmey did not "inject himself" in a directive way into their meetings. "When the State Board met," one Department administrator observed, "the Commissioner often acted as one of its members; frequently he would ask questions of the staff like other Board members, then he would offer recommendations." Another administrator interpreted Commissioner Casmey as taking the role of executive secretary in relating to the State Board, a role that did not encourage the expression of strong policy opinions. As for the Commissioner, he summed up his style in these words: "They are not my Board. I don't try to control, rather to motivate and stimulate."

Nearly all Board members in 1979 as well as 1973 responded approvingly when questioned about the Commissioner's approach to policymaking. His approach certainly took into account the preferences of Board members. Three of those interviewed in 1973 claimed that Casmey "often" took ideas or suggestions from them; the other three respondents said that he did so at least "sometimes." In 1979, six of the nine respondents checked "often" as against two who indicated "sometimes" and just one who said "rarely." "Give him (Casmey) a sentence," gested one Board member, "and he'll come up with a policy statement." Yet despite the overall positive descriptions, there were '79 Board members who complained that meetings were devoted excessively to "dog and pony shows" put on by the Department and that meeting agendas lacked systematic policy focus. Even some Department administrators conceded that the State Board sometimes got bogged down in "administrivia," with the Department having the responsibility of identifying "policy issues" and pushing the Board to deal with them in depth. "When we do," this administrator observed, "they (the Board members) get excited; they love it."

Education lobbyists, whose organizations were often represented at Board meetings, were divided on how much "real direction" was given to the Commissioner by the Board. Several respondents in both 1973 and 1979 saw the State Board, reflecting the views of its members or those voiced at its hearing, as often modifying policy proposals made by the Department of Education. The '79 lobbyists were particularly apt to identify specific board members whose "drive" gave the Department "pretty good" directions in such areas as affirmative action, Indian education, vocational training, and bilingual instruction. Still, other education lobbyists seemed to regard these actions as only sporadic Board interventions; that, in the main, the State Board was a "screening and reacting agency" for Department-formulated proposals. In the words of one '79 lobbyist: "The Commissioner massages the Board; they return the favor."

The "rubber stamp" image was upsetting to Board member respondents. Several insisted that the body on which they served was "independent" of bureaucratic direction. As summarized by a Board member in 1973:

> This Board is very independent. The Commissioner is a creation of the State Board of Education. We appoint him and listen to his suggestions because we respect him. But we are independent of him and, especially, of the State Department of Education. We expect them to listen to us, too, and we don't accept their ideas merely because they are professionals. That is why there is a lay board, and this Board is very strong. I have been on many civic bodies, but I've never known one where each member had such firm convictions about education, including the conviction that we cannot leave education to the professionals. That is why we are members of the Board. We expect the Department to listen very carefully to what we have to say because we provide them with their budget. Through the Commissioner we run the State Department.

External Policymaking Relationships

Though policymaking relationships with the Commissioner were the primary ones for the State Board, there were other relationships of importance with interest groups and legislative leaders. With respect to the first, the State Board was usually the target of influence attempts; with respect to the second, the State Board was usually in the position of attempting to exert influence.

Interest Groups.

By law all State Board meetings were open to the public. Average attendance, however, was small; in the estimation of a Department observer, the audience rarely exceeded fifteen "non-employees." But some public hearings, notably those on school desegregation at the beginning of the decade, hundreds of persons attended. As of 1979, most of the major state-level school interest groups, along with the Board of Teaching and staff from the governor's office and legislature, had representatives at meetings of the State Board.

Most school lobbyists not only attended Board meetings, provided testimony, and presented written proposals but also communicated with individual Board members. Even so, this lobbying effort was hardly comparable to that directed at the legislature. The State Board, according to a '73 lobbyist, was "an entirely different kind of animal from the legislature." By this apparently was meant that the State Board had less need for interest group information and advice than the legislature, since it had the Department of Education to provide these; and that it had less susceptibility to lobbying tactics, since both structure and tradition tended to insulate the State Board. More important was the belief of the school lobbyists that the State Board was not, by and large, where the big policy decisions were made; that the influence resources of their organizations were better invested in the legislature. As one '79 lobbyist evaluated it, the State Board was "at the bottom of the list to lobby;" another remarked, "State Board support doesn't really help on important issues."

Board member interviewees, when questioned as to the frequency with which various groups "communicated their views" directly to the State Board, gave the estimates shown in the first two columns of Table 13. Educator and school-related organizations head the list, followed by racial-ethnic groups and parents in 1973, and by these groups, plus women's

TABLE 13

GROUP CONTACTS WITH STATE BOARD

Groups	Named by State Board Respondents: "Often Communicating Their Views" 1973 (N=6)	"Often Communicating Their Views" 1979 (N=8)	"Most Often Sought to Influence" 1973 (N=6)	"Most Often Sought to Influence" 1979 (N=8)
"Vocational education"	100%	88%	17%	100%
MEA	83%	88%	67%	88%
"Special education"	83%	63%	50%	25%
Local superintendents	83%	50%	33%	13%
MFT	83%	50%	83%	38%
MSBA	83%	50%	67%	50%
Racial-Ethnic groups	50%	50%	17%	13%
MASA	0	13%	0	0
Parents (PTSA)	50%	13%	0	0
Labor groups	0	0	0	0
Business groups	0	0	0	0
Farm groups	0	0	0	0
Religious groups	0	0	0	13%
City government officials	0	0	0	0
Women's groups*	--	25%	--	25%
Board of Teaching*	--	25%	--	25%

*Not included on original list of categories shown to respondents.

groups, in 1979. Except for these, not a single noneducational group was seen as often contacting the State Board. These respondents also were asked to identify the groups which "most often sought to influence" the State Board when that body was deciding a policy issue. Their replies are contained in the second two columns of Table 13. MFT, MEA, MSBA, and "special education" received the largest number of mentions in 1973 as organizations attempting to influence the State Board.

Board members in 1973 were reluctant to single out any organization as being "the most influential." One member did name the MSBA; another claimed that "special education had the strongest lobby in the state." Our '73 respondents from the school interest groups offered a somewhat different assessment. Two picked the MSBA, stressing that at least three members of the State Board were required by law to have had local board experience. The two other lobbyists thought that the MEA was most influential because of its large size and strong organization.

Board respondents in 1979 saw the same four organizations as among those most often seeking to influence the State Board. But more (88% as against 67%) said the MEA was doing this; fewer identified the MFT (38% as against 83%), the MSBA (50% as against 67%), and "special education" (25% as against 50%) when compared with the 1973 assessments. More interesting was the inclusion of "vocational education" among these groups. It was named by just one respondent in 1973, by all respondents in 1979. And when the '79 Board members were asked to identify the most influential groups, the rank order was vocational education (four nominations), the MEA (three nominations), the MSBA (two nominations) and the Board of Teaching (two nominations). The last of these did not exist at the time of the 1973 interviews. By the late 1970s, however, the Board of Teaching was frequently in bitter conflict with the State Board over teacher certification issues; for the State Board from 1973 to 1980 retained a veto power over the Board of Teaching's resolution of these issues. The Board of Teaching, in the judgment of two '79 respondents, had a considerable "negative influence" on the State Board of Education. As for the influence of vocational education representatives, this was attributable, according to one Department insider, "to the frequency (of their communications), their well-thought-through analyses of the issues, and the fervor of their presentations."*

School lobbyists were also asked in 1979 about whether there were "any education organization particularly influential with the State Board." Just as in 1973, these respondents rated the MSBA (six nominations) and the MEA (five nominations) as the top two, with the same reasons being given for their influence as earlier. MASA was named by three respondents as was the AMSD. The first organization was seen as having good access relationships through the Department and Commissioner. As for the Association of Metropolitan School Districts, its influence was attributed to the large number of students it represented and its skillful presentation to the Board. Two noneducation groups were mentioned by at least three school lobbyists as having "some influence" with the State Board: the Minnesota Council for the Handicapped and the Citizens League.

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*In Minnesota the State Board of Education also serves as the State Board for Vocational Education.

Still in all, the State Board policy arena was one where the education establishment in one organizational form or another was effectively represented, while other groups were marginally influential except, perhaps, during periods of controversy.

Legislative Leaders. State boards of education, speaking generally, rarely have much impact on school policy decisions made by legislatures. This was the case for the Minnesota State Board in 1973; it was still the case in 1979. True, Board members by the end of the decade did express more confidence that they had developed a structure (including a Board committee) to formulate legislative policy proposals and that these were effectively communicated to the legislature. Most Board respondents in 1979 saw legislative communications as taking place through reliance on Commissioner Casmey and Department staff, supported by Board member testimony and personal contacts with legislators. All '79 respondents said that the State Board had the "means" to influence legislators. (Only four of six said this in 1973; two of these indicated little beyond formal presentations.) Most '79 respondents identified personal contacts with legislators as their means. Several Board members intimated that they had good "access" or "rapport" with lawmakers; that there were "good, persuasive, informative discussions." Only a few Board respondents in 1979 voiced doubts about this description of legislative relationships; one saying that in the '79 session the Board did not have much influence; the other saying that Board-legislature communications were sometimes done "poorly;" "The legislature still knows little about us."

More legislator respondents in 1979 than in 1973 did see the State Board as communicating with the legislature and as making personal contacts. (Only five of 15 identified contacts in 1973; in 1979 it was 11 of 15.) Nonetheless, language such as "infrequently," "rarely," and "reactive" continued to be used to describe these contacts. And only one or two Board members were ever singled out by legislator respondents as engaging in this activity. Moreover, overall legislator ratings of the State Board were no higher in 1979 than in 1973; analysis by party and branch revealed particularly low scores from a handful of DFL Senators (see Table 14).

The legislators who gave the highest ratings to State Board influence stressed that body's prestige and capacity to "represent the public." Those who gave the lowest ratings said either that the Board had no real role to play in formulating school legislation, or that it had such a role but had no power. A "bunch of eunuchs" was one blunt appraisal.

School lobbyists were also questioned about the influence of the State Board; if the Board "ever took the lead" in promoting education legislation. In 1973 half the lobbyists answered "Yes." The percentage was exactly the same in 1979 (six of twelve respondents). Lobbyists who attributed some leadership to the State Board pointed to efforts to get funding and programs in such areas as Indian education, bilingual education, special education, and vocational education. Other lobbyists, however, viewed most of these efforts as coming from the Department of Education. As one put it, "The Board is barely a player--you almost never hear from them; one rarely sees State Board members in the legislative halls."

TABLE 14

LEGISLATOR RATINGS OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

	Legislators		1979 Legislators Only			
	1973	1979	DFL		I-R	
Question/Response Categories	(N=14)	(N=16)	House	Senate	House	Senat
"How would you assess the importance of the State Board in actually formulating and working for education legislation?						
"Single most important participant"	0	0	0	0	0	0
"One of the most important participants"	1	3	1	0	1	1
"A participant of minor importance"	10	8	2	2	3	1
"Not important at all as a participant"	3	5	1	3	0	1

Episodic Involvement of the Governor

Organized teachers were not the only new power wielders in Minnesota state school policymaking in the 1970s; political leaders were increasingly influential in this process. Not content with the role of overseer for public education, or to let others create policy, governors and legislators began to take a more detailed, programmatic, and prescriptive look at the public schools. At the decade's beginning, the most dramatic and important manifestation of this concern was DFL Governor Wendell Anderson's legislative press to achieve school finance reform. And, in October of 1971, after hectic regular and special sessions, the reform was enacted. Following the 1973 session--which saw major state policy decisions dealing with school aid equalization, collective bargaining procedures, and control of teacher certification--gubernatorial interest turned to other areas; and it was the Minnesota legislature that gave central direction to the school policy process. Then, as the decade closed, Albert Quie, an Independent-Republican, again drew upon the powers of the governor's office to focus policy attention on a school issue--the "K-3" issue--one on which he was defeated in the 1979 legislative session.

Reasons for Involvement

The authority lodged in the governor's office makes its incumbent a central actor in the determination of state school policy. The governor is charged by statute with preparing the biennial budget for legislative consideration, a budget that contains funds for school support and for the operation of the education agency. The governor also reviews all bills passed by the legislature, and must either sign or veto them. Finally, the governor appoints the members of the State Board of Education and shares in the appointment, with the Board, of the Commissioner of Education. In short, the responsibilities of office mean that the Minnesota governor is always involved with state school policymaking. But the extent and nature of this involvement depend on many factors.

One factor that influenced gubernatorial involvement in education during the seventies was the expanded power of the office. As summarized by Williamson:

> The Minnesota governorship of the 1970s and beyond is a more powerful office than its predecessor office was. Lengthened terms, increased staff, growing budgetary consolidation, administrative reorganization, reawakened partisanship, and changed political conditions all contribute to this growth of power.[21]

Constitutional and statutory additions to such traditional prerogatives as delivering messages to the legislature, exercising an item veto, and calling special sessions greatly enlarged gubernatorial authority. This authority was augmented, too, by other power resources, including staff assistance, party support, and a capacity to mobilize statewide public opinion. "Gone are the days," Gieske and Brandt observed, "when the governor can do very little and allow the legislative process to work its own independent way with little or no assistance or interference from that office."[22] The Minnesota governor came to command in the 1970s such an impressive array of institutional resources that, when combined with personal means of influence, they gave this official a potential for school policy leadership unmatched by any other actor.

Minnesota governors not only had the power resources to influence school legislation, but also an interest, political as well as personal, in doing so. The political dimension of this interest had important fiscal roots. The ever-increasing magnitude of state school expenditures (approximately one billion dollars per year by 1979) would have made it impossible for any governor to avoid involvement. As one aide put it:

> The day when decisions in educational financing can be made without consideration of the fiscal and tax limitations is dead. Education is the largest single item in the state budget...The decision on the school finance formula, and its coordinated levy limits, is the most important single spending and tax decision the governor and the legislature have to make.[23]

Probably more significant than the actual size of the state education budget in explaining the governor's policy role were the outbursts of taxpayer anger. The "taxpayer revolt" appeared to be particularly intense and widespread in the time periods surrounding the 1970 and, to a lesser extent, the 1978 gubernatorial elections. In these circumstances, the advocacy of tax reform and relief had overriding political saliency. Wendell Anderson stressed this in his campaign against Republican Douglas Head, as did Albert Quie in campaigning against Governor Rudy Perpich. And, given the allocation of state expenditures, a tax emphasis leads easily to a consideration of school spending. In Anderson's case, school finance reform emerged as a concomitant of tax reform during the campaign itself, as a response to a Citizens League report and as a counter to Head's proposal.

In Quie's case, the priority given to new educational programs was done in part to give a positive cast to Quie's policy stance, rather than have him portrayed as "just a tax cutter" responding to the political winds set in motion by California's Proposition 13.

Politics undoubtedly set the context and dictated much of the timing for the major gubernatorial initiatives in education. Yet the policy specifics of these initiatives also grew out of the personal convictions and experiences of the two governors. Before becoming governor in 1971, Wendell Anderson had served for twelve years in the Minnesota legislature, most of it in the Senate. Here he had come to work closely with DFL leaders long concerned with inequities in school aid. Besides such experiences, Anderson was alert to events in other states, like Michigan, where efforts were underway to overhaul the school finance system. And Anderson had close advisers who had unusual expertness in both the tax and school finance areas.

Albert Quie, unlike Anderson, was largely a newcomer to Minnesota state politics. While he had been a state senator in the 1950s, the bulk of Quie's political life was spent in Washington where he had twenty years of service as a Congressman. Quie, however, was no newcomer to education policy concerns, for during his Washington tenure he had been a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, and for more than a decade was its ranking minority member. In this capacity, Quie had attained power and credibility in federal education policymaking. His impact was especially noteworthy in such areas as vocational education, grants to college students, categorical aid consolidation, and programs for the handicapped. In the power relationships of Congress, Quie was an effective leader, being depicted by scholars as a "canny resourceful politican, diligent in legislative work , and genuinely concerned about policy issues... a consensus builder."[24] Given such a track record of activity and achievement, it was hardly surprising that he would seek to use education to make his policy mark on Minnesota politics.

Anderson and Quie as Education Governors

In pushing for their education priorities, Anderson and Quie experienced quite different policy success, with the former getting much of what he wanted and the latter getting very little. While a full explanation of this difference would have to take many factors into account, comparing the two governors with respect to their power resources and legislative strategies does supply a part of the answer. Such comparisons, to be sure, are hazardous. Political circumstances vary over time; for leaders the matrix of constraints and opportunities is rarely the same from one period to the next. Still, comparative assessments, if tempered by caution, can afford some insights into the political dynamics of initiating change in state school policy in Minnesota.

At a general level, there were some striking similarities between the two governors. Both Anderson and Quie had extensive experience with the legislative process. Both were first-term governors; each had been elected in a hotly contested campaign where taxes were the main issue. Both confronted legislatures where their party lacked a majority in either house. And both had decided at the outset of their term to give the schools a high priority, Anderson with his "Fair School Finance Plan" and Quie with his "Primary School (K-3) Improvement Program." (Both issues are analyzed in detail in Chapter III.)

When it came to resources and strategies, however, the differences between Anderson and Quie were marked. Comparison of the responses of interviewees in 1973 with those in 1979 to questions about gubernatorial involvement in state school policymaking suggests five dimensions as differentiating the two governors; (1) publicizing the issue, (2) developing legislator support, (3) deploying staff, (4) mobilizing lobbying groups, and (5) using the formal powers of office. A frequency distribution of legislator perceptions of these and other means of gubernatorial influence are reported in Table 15.

Issue Publicity

Soon after his budget address emphasizing tax-school finance reform, Governor Anderson sought to arouse public enthusiasm for his proposal by embarking on a speaking tour of the state. Meetings were held with business, labor, civic, and school leaders. Media coverage was extensive. Once this was done, Anderson reverted to a low profile stance, relying on staff and DFL legislators to carry the issue. As deadlock emerged, the Governor moved the issue back into the public limelight with a searing veto message denouncing as unacceptable the one plan that had passed the legislature. Anderson's skillful use of the media was pointed to by several

TABLE 15

LEGISLATOR PERCEPTIONS OF THE RESOURCES AND STRATEGIES OF THE GOVERNOR

Question/Response Categories*	1973 Perceptions of Anderson		1979 Perceptions of Quie	
	DFL (N=7)	REP. (N=8)	DFL (N=9)	I-R (N=8)
"How did the governor and his staff work to get his major education or school finance proposal adopted by your committee (the legislature)?"				
Used staff to inform and persuade	4	8	1	5
Worked with legislative leaders (caucus) in own party	5	4	2	5
Vetoed unacceptable bills	3	5	0	0
Publicized the issue through media and other means	4	2	2	2
Cultivated bipartisan support	2	2	1	0
Personal appearance before legislature	0	0	5	5
Mobilized educator group support	0	0	0	2
Personal lobbying of legislators	0	0	1	1
No (not much) effort or activity	0	0	5	2

*Coded from responses to the open-ended question.

interview respondents as applying significant political pressure on his legislative opponents.

Governor Quie also made strong early attempts to focus public attention on his K-3 policy initiative. Not only were there the usual meetings, speeches, and press conferences but the governor's office also prepared a "special message" on education. More spectacular were Quie's appearances, the first in twenty-four years for a Minnesota governor, before House and Senate committees to present his proposal. (Quie even responded to a round of questions in testifying before the School Aids Division of the House.) The Governor had invested in this issue high political stakes; he alone had pushed it to the top of the policy agenda. Yet, as the issue moved to final resolution in the legislature, there were few gubernatorial efforts to use the media to activate potential supporters. Whether such efforts would have had any impact is hard to say. It is clear, though, that the K-3 proposal never became a popular political issue, the kind of issue to which constituency-oriented lawmakers respond. And the absence of widespread citizen and educator demands for this change contributed mightily to its defeat. "There simply was no large constituency for K-3... there was no political liability in voting against it," said one observer, adding that: "Anderson had both tax appeal and educational appeal, while Quie had just educational appeal."

Legislator Support

Party discipline became an increasingly important resource in the 1970s, and both Anderson and Quie worked with their respective legislative party caucuses to mobilize partisan backing for their school reform proposals. In 1971 Anderson's DFL Party was in the minority by small margins (one vote in the Senate, five votes in the House). DFLers had to stick together to have much prospect of success. The same was true of the Independent-Republicans in 1979, for they were a decided minority in the Senate (twenty to forty-seven) and held just half the seats in the House.

Although the political party resource was mobilized in each situation, there were limits on the extent it could motivate legislators to support a governor's program. This was especially true in Quie's case where all the I-R legislators were "on the record" in every decision arena--subcommittee, committee, and floor vote--as favoring the Governor's K-3 bills. When the bills failed, however, the I-Rers then unanimously cast their votes for the DFL school finance plan, rather than hold that plan hostage in the House until some compromise favorable to Quie had been obtained. Partisan loyalty to a governor was no match for a politically attractive program like the one House DFL leaders had crafted in their "something-for-everyone" (except the Governor) approach to school finance.

Maintaining political party discipline was essential to Anderson and Quie, but such support by itself could never have produced a bill. The imperative for a winning legislative coalition was the ability of each governor to secure votes from the rival party. Anderson was able to do this, at least in part; Quie was not. Success for Anderson came in the Senate where key Conservative leaders were linked to the Governor by ties of friendship as well as philosophy. In the Senate, though not in the House, Anderson's reform proposal met with some bipartisan support,

support that was cultivated by the Governor and his staff. No such support was forthcoming for Albert Quie. Several DFL leaders seemed determined "to get the Governor." And Quie's feeble efforts at consultation with their leaders, and his angry charges at a mid-session press conference that DFLers were "callous" and "arrogant" in their rejection of his K-3 proposal, did little to establish bipartisan linkages. Quite the contrary, as a consequence of Quie's action and those of his DFL opponents, K-3 became in the end a test of party will and political power, a test in which educational rhetoric provided the symbols but not the substance of the decision process.

Staff Deployment

A governor's use of staff to promote a legislative program is always a delicate matter. Minnesota legislators, in Williamson's view, "often judge a governorship for the skill by which its staff deals with the legislature. Most important, this means possessing an acute sensitivity to legislative prerogatives and being able to influence without aggressively antagonizing leaders and chairmen."[25] Governor Anderson, compared to predecessors, put together an elaborate staff; then deployed them to foster legislator support. Anderson's staff person in the tax-school finance area was particularly adept. He acquired such a substantive and political grasp of the issue that DFL lawmakers relied heavily upon him for information, as did some influential Conservatives. Moreover, this staffer came to be seen by legislative leaders as a "horse trader," identifying and testing for the Governor possible compromises.

The staff work done for Governor Quie on the K-3 issue received few accolades from legislators, even from I-R respondents. Though praising the personal qualities and hard work of Quie staffers, several I-R interviewees saw recurrent communication problems as undercutting staff efforts and making it difficult to get clear and consistent signals from the governor's office. Predictably, DFL respondents were much more critical, stressing the staff's lack of experience and skill. "They did not," one DFL leader claimed, "understand school aid, did not understand legislators, and did not understand the political process." Whether or not Quie's staff work was as inept as DFLers portrayed it, there is enough agreement in the interview data to suggest that this was not a resource which served the Governor at all well in his K-3 efforts.

Lobby Group Mobilization

A governor's staff typically seeks not only to mobilize policy support in the legislature, but also to attract proponents from among interested lobbying groups. Yet the major school groups had little to say in the formulation of Anderson's reform proposals, and their support was a marginal consideration in his legislative strategy. The MFT, with its labor tie, did have access to the governor's office, as did school representatives from the big cities, traditional DFL strongholds. But the two main lobbying groups, MEA and MSBA, were seen then by top DFLers as narrow in their viewpoint on school finance and as being "tied" to the Conservatives. With the passage of time, gubernatorial relationships with the MEA, though

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not with the MSBA, improved markedly. MEA leaders regarded themselves as being "professionally and personally" on good terms with Anderson. More to the point, perhaps, the MEA commanded electoral power, a fact that could hardly have escaped the calculations of an "actutely political" governor.[26]

Governor Quie also formulated his school policy initiative independent of the direct advice of school interest groups, though the longstanding advocacy of class size reduction by the MEA, and its flamboyant President, Donald Hill, was an important part of the background of that initiative. During his '78 campaign, Quie had embraced the idea of reduced class size when speaking at a MEA Convention. His staffers insist, though, that the Governor "really believed in the K-3 focus as a way to improve educational quality in the context of enrollment decline. He has had this idea formulated in his mind for several years." In any event, the MEA did emerge as the most influential advocate of Quie's plan; an advocate whose power was such that the DFL Senate Majority Leader, near the end of the '79 session, publicly warned his caucus of teacher retribution at the polls if nothing were done for the K-3 proposal.[27] Two other school groups--PTSA and the Elementary Principals Association--were also vocal advocates. The other school groups, however, though often praising Quie's commitment and expressing hope for compromise, cast their lot with the DFL school finance plans, seeing in these plans more money for their respective interests and more discretion in its use. In light of this attractiveness, Quie and his staff would have had great difficulty, even if they had started early, in broadening their base of support among educators. But their meetings with school lobbyists aimed at communication and coordination came late in the session. They were, one critic argued, yet another example of the Governor's efforts being "too little, too late."

Formal Power Use

Along with media, party, staff, and interest group resources, governors can employ their formidable legal powers in pressing for desired legislation. Here, again, Anderson more fully used his resources than did Quie. Governor Anderson drew upon his authority to call special sessions and to veto bills to force a legislative situation where a compromise acceptable to him was likely to be forthcoming. His resort to the veto was singled out by several legislator respondents as being critical in reaching agreement.

Governor Quie, on the other hand, while occasionally making vague threats of a veto, in the end conceded defeat on the issue, putting the best face he could on the results of the process. In fact, Quie conceded even before the final battle was fought on the Senate floor, an action that angered several Senate leaders. But as one I-R respondent interpreted it, "Quie is an excellent 'politician'. He really got his name connected with K-3, but he knew when to bail out--before things got bloody." A DFL Senator simply stated, "He blew it. He backed out too soon."

Conclusions

To conclude, Governor Wendell Anderson was seen by most of our '73 respondents as having a decisive impact on tax-school finance reform. A few House Conservative leaders did claim that "the legislature would have gone in the same direction without the governor's impact, but would not have gone as far relative to reform." As for Anderson's resources and strategies, interview respondents emphasized his (1) use of media to foment public pressure; (2) his "turning loose" of skillful staff persons to inform and persuade legislators; (3) his efforts to sustain party discipline among DFLers; (4) his capacity under stress to maintain bipartisan relationships with key Senate Conservatives; and, ultimately, (5) his willingness to employ the formal powers of the governor's office to force a compromise. Unsurprisingly, most legislator respondents judged Governor Anderson to be "politically shrewd" in dealing with the issue; several House Conservative respondents thought the description "heavy handed" to be more appropriate.

Interview respondents in 1979 presented a more negative picture of Governor Quie's K-3 reform efforts. Many, in fact, were sharply critical of the "political handling" of the issue.* Good intentions, in their view, were not a substitute for good politics. Despite the heavy partisan overtones of these assessments, it is hard to deny their conclusion that on the K-3 issue the Governor's Office first invested high political stakes, giving it a priority second only to tax reduction, then could not play the legislative game well enough to win them. Even sympathetic observers point to a variety of factors as hampering Quie's efforts, among them (1) the insufficient use of the media, especially to emphasize the Governor's expertness in education policy; (2) the failure to start early or to pursue systematically the building of a broad-based coalition, and instead allowing K-3--and, more generally, "education quality"--to become a partisan issue; (3) the inexperience and, at times, confusion of staff members; and (4) the unwillingness to give legislators clear signals as to gubernatorial intent and to back these signals with the full power resources of the governor's office. Most debilitating, in the estimation of one insider, was the lack of any "overall strategy" aimed at the legislative success of the K-3 proposal.

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*Much of this criticism was publicly reported at the time. See particularly, Steve Brandt, "Miscues Doomed I-R School Aid Plan," Minneapolis Tribune, May 15, 1979.

While the politics of being an "education governor" were more successfully mastered in the 1970s by Wendell Anderson than by Albert Quie, it would be premature to conclude that the latter will not in time also deserve this label. The Governor in the 1979 session was trying to promote a completely new issue, one where the necessary legislative spade work had not been done. Indeed, according to one long-time observer, Quie had to overcome a "legacy of legislator and staff leadership with expertness in finance not program." Nor was there the political urgency coming from taxpayer anger, court decisions, and actions in other states that had earlier characterized school finance reform. Quie also had to confront a legislature where the key committee posts dealing with K-3 were in the hands of DFLers. [illegible]se lawmakers had for nearly a decade provided direction in this area; they were not going to relinquish or even share policy influence with an upstart governor, particularly one from the rival party.

Governor Quie in the 1979 session was not without some success in the school policy area, notwithstanding his defeat on the K-3 issue. Supporters argued that it took considerable political courage to push for expanded school support in the context of the "Proposition 13 syndrome," and that his efforts resulted in more new aid money ($225 million) for the schools than they otherwise would have received from the DFL-dominated legislature. Along with this, there was funding support for other Quie interests, including programs for the gifted and talented, and the creation of a Governor's Task Force on Educational Policy. Beyond these tangible gains, the Governor's aides believed that Quie's K-3 emphasis got state school policymakers to begin to think more about educational quality, as opposed to school spending; that his efforts helped set the policy agenda in this area for the 1980s.

Growing Legislator Assertiveness

The Minnesota legislature, along with the governor's office, is the ultimate state authority for education and the locus of accommodation for fiscal decisions. Though there were occasional periods of dramatic gubernatorial involvement in school policymaking during the seventies, sustained policy direction came primarily from a small group of legislators,mostly DFLers. Their party had taken control of both the House and the Senate for the first time in the 1972 election; and, despite a severe electoral setback in 1978 (the I-R gained for a time an even split in the House), the DFL held majorities in the legislature throughout the decade.

The policy impact of DFL control has not yet received much scholarly analysis. A popular perception equates the DFL with state governmental expansion and the I-R with restraints on this growth, with the politics of both being seen as reflecting basic shifts in the public mood. As summarized by one capitol reporter:

> The 1970s were years dominated by the DFL. Under that banner and led by the popular Wendell R. Anderson as Governor, state government grew rapidly. It assumed huge new financial obligations for helping local government, especially in the field of education. It asserted itself to stabilize the frightening growth of local property taxes through the use of the state sales and income taxes. And always, it seemed, there was a budget surplus for new programs and more local aid. The inexorable squeeze of property-taxpayers was eased and over the decade the state government became preeminent.
>
> Last year, 1979, Independent-Republicans, led by Governor Quie, began to halt that movement. The public mood was exemplified by the tax-slashing Proposition 13 in California, I-R leaders reasoned...A huge surplus was distributed in tax relief and the tax laws were revised so future tax surpluses will be much smaller. Independent-Republicans were attempting to change the direction of the '70s.[28]

Whatever the merits of such an interpretation, it is clear that DFL legislative leaders in the 1970s viewed public education as a major area for state policy initiatives and that, as a consequence, the role of the state in school governance grew enormously.

Even by the early 1970s, the Minnesota legislature had been quite active in school governance. In 1972-73 a content analysis of state legal codes in thirty-six domains of education policy was conducted for the National Institute of Education. With respect to these data, Wirt developed a measure of the "centralization of authority over education." On this scale of state centralization, Minnesota ranked high (eighth) among the fifty states.[29] By the end of the decade, state statutes and regulations were giving added direction to local school decision-making. The state was providing a two-thirds share of school support, while placing limits on local levies. A statewide legal framework had been imposed for the collective bargaining of teachers, administrators, and school boards. And school districts had been required by state mandates to engage in a comprehensive process of planning, evaluation, and reporting on a regional as well as a local basis. Though a compelling case can be made for each of these interventions, their overall effect was to make state government the dominant force in policymaking for Minnesota public schools.

Reasons for Involvement

The 1970s witnessed in Minnesota, as elsewhere, a striking demonstration of "capacity-building" by its state legislature. This institutional strengthening exemplified the national trends identified by Alan Rosenthal, Director of the Eagleton Institute of Politics:

> Facilities improved; member salaries increased; procedures became more efficient; processes opened up; staff grew larger; information expanded; ethics were enhanced and conflicts of interest became fewer; democratization took place.*

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*"The Legislator as an Individual and the Legislature as an Institution" (Address to Pre-session Legislative Conference, Florida House of Representatives, Nov. 19-22, 1978), p. 3.

In Minnesota, biennial sessions were replaced by annual sessions. The nonpartisan legislature with its absence of party labels came to an end. More "new style" legislators took seats: younger, better educated, cosmopolitan, somewhat more likely to be women or minority persons, and to see themselves as full-time lawmakers. Along with changes among legislators, there were significant changes in the size and skill of the staff available to them. All in all, Minnesota moved far in the 1970s in the direction of a professional legislature.[30]

Not only had legislative capacity grown, so had the willingness to use it. The politicization of education worked to activate legislators just as it had the governor. Mounting public concerns about the schools were expressed in many ways. Yet from the vantage point of the capitol it was the "tax clamor" that remained politically fundamental. Tax-conscious legislators had to be sensitive to school spending both as to size (it was the largest single item in the state budget) and to allocation (lawmakers were very concerned that their districts received adequate consideration when the state dollars were being distributed).

Another major factor that appeared to motivate lawmakers was the mounting public criticism of the schools. As reported in one summary article:

> ...all through the 1970s, Minnesotan's opinions of public schools' performances dropped sharply, as measured by the Minnesota Poll. The proportion who said schools' performance is "good" or "excellent" declined from 63 percent in 1974 to 36 percent in 1979. At the same time, complaints about the teaching of basic skills such as reading, writing, and math have enlivened many meetings of school boards, PTAs, and parents.[31]

Legislators reflected this criticism. Carl Johnson, the powerful Chairman of the House Education Committee, stated the publics' concern thusly: "Why," he asked, "can't these kids who have graduated from high school address an envelope?" 'Why can't they make change at the cash register?" Minnesota legislators were hardly disillusioned with public education, as has been reported for state lawmakers elsewhere. Still, several legislative leaders were greatly concerned about its performance and continued public support. Legislators also perceived sporadic constituency pressures on other school issues, such as racial desegregation, teacher militancy, student discipline, treatment of the handicapped, sex equity, textbook selection, and the effects of enrollment declines. By the mid-1970s, the last of these had become a central source of pressure as decline, and attendant controversies, became pervasive across Minnesota school districts.

Attitudes Toward School Policy

What did Minnesota legislative leaders believe about school policy issues? Ten questionnaire items, grouped under five headings, along with the percentages of legislator respondents in 1973 and 1979 who agreed with each item, are shown in Table 16. For the purpose of comparison, the responses of State Board of Education members and of education lobbyists are also shown.

Looking at legislator responses reveals both groups to be largely in agreement that Minnesota could continue to "afford to give more money

TABLE 16

ATTITUDES OF STATE POLICYMAKERS TOWARD FIVE SCHOOL ISSUES
(PERCENTAGES INDICATING AGREEMENT WITH EACH ISSUE STATEMENT)

Policy Issue Statement	Legislative Leaders		Board Members		Education Lobbyists	
	1973 (N=9)	1979 (N=9)	1973 (N=6)	1979 (N=7)	1973 (N=5)	1979 (N=11)
School Support						
"Given its wealth and other vital needs, this state cannot afford to give more money to the schools."	11%	11%	0%	29%	0%	9%
"Current public school expenditures in this state are sufficient to provide sound educational programs for nearly all its children."	78%	89%	50%	100%	60%	82%
Spending Equity						
"The amount of money available for a local educational program should be determined in some measure by the wealth of the local community."	33%	22%	33%	14%	40%	18%
"State government should guarantee that equal dollar amounts are spent on each public school child, unless a valid educational reason can be found for spending some different amount."	56%	78%	100%	86%	60%	45%
Need for School Changes						
"Schools in this state are much too slow in adopting needed educational innovations."	56%	22%	0%	29%	60%	36%
"Despite all we hear about 'crisis' in education, our public schools are working well for the great majority of students."	78%	89%	100%	71%	60%	100%
Educator Accountability						
"The apparent need for more money to run the public schools is largely because educators are inefficient in their management of fiscal resources."	22%	11%	0%	29%	40%	18%
"Educators keep asking for ever-increasing state spending without being willing to show any real return for the taxpayer's additional dollars."	56%	44%	50%	29%	20%	55%
Local Control of Schools						
"Local control of education is the basic principle that should guide the state in making policies for the public school."	33%	44%	67%	100%	60%	64%
"Local school officials know best how to run their districts and the role of the State Department of Education should be confined to assisting these local officials in doing what they wish to do."	33%	44%	33%	71%	40%	55%

to the schools" but that existing expenditures were sufficient to provide "sound educational programs" for nearly all students. Both groups, too, took a reformist posture, albeit more strongly in 1979 than in 1973, on the equity items. More than two-thirds supported the Serrano principle of fiscal neutrality by rejecting the contrary proposition that "the money available for a local educational program should be determined in some measure by the wealth of the local community." And a majority of each group (56 percent in 1973; 78 percent in 1979) agreed with the recommendation that "state government should guarantee districts equal dollar amounts... unless a valid education reason can be found for spending some different amount."

Legislator respondents in 1979 did seem to be more satisfied than their '73 counterparts with the pace of innovation in Minnesota schools; only 22 percent as against 56 percent agreed that it was "much too slow." And an overwhelming majority of both groups saw the public school as "working well for the great majority of students." As for educator accountability, neither group of legislators had many respondents willing to accept the harsh indictment that the need for more school spending "is largely because educators are inefficient." Still, over half (56 percent) in 1973 did agree with the proposition that "educators keep asking for ever-increasing state spending without being willing to show any real return for the taxpayer's additional dollars."

The only large difference between the legislator responses and those of the Board members and education lobbyists was in their attitude toward the local control of education. Less than half of the legislators (33 percent in 1973 and 44 percent in 1979) as against all the board officials and almost two-thirds of the education lobbyists agreed that "local control" should be "the basic principle" in guiding state policy action.

Information Sources

The modernization of the Minnesota legislature has been marked by many changes. None, though, has been more pronounced than the expansion of professional staff. In 1967 the House and Senate employed 219 staff members, with only 33 of these persons working year-round. By 1977 staff had reached 517 employees; of these, 315 worked year-round. In 1967 niether house had any professional researchers; ten years later there were 47 in the legislature.[32] The education committee in each house had a full-time staff person, supported by part-time aides. In addition, the committee and subcommittee chairmen had administrative assistants who sometimes did policy staff work. Given this development, it could be anticipated that staff persons would be frequently named, particularly in 1979, when legislator respondents were asked to identify the individuals and groups who supplied "the most useful information about the public schools"; then to select the one source that was "personally the most useful."

The data on information sources (see Table 17) disclose that legislative staff was identified more often in 1979 (by six respondents) than in 1973 (by three respondents). Even so, staff was still only the sixth most frequently named information source . Teachers and school boards, along with the Department of Education, were identified frequently in both time periods. The Department headed the ranking in 1973; the MSBA

TABLE 17

INFORMATION SOURCES FOR LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

Sources	Legislators Naming Among "Most Useful"		Legislators Naming the "Personally" Single Most Useful	
	1973 (N=15)	1979 (N=15)	1973 (N=14)	1979 (N=15)
MSBA	7	13	1	4
MEA	10	11	0	2
Department of Education	12	8	2	3
MFT	9	8	0	0
Local School Officials	8	7	2	0
Legislative Staff	3	6	3	4
MASA	1	4	0	0
AMSD	-	4	0	1
Special Education Groups	0	4	0	0
Principals Associations	2	3	0	0
PTSA	2	2	0	1
Individual Legislators	2	2	1	1
Governor's Staff	7	2	5	0

held this spot in 1979. The MEA, MFT, and local school officials maintained their respective rankings over the two periods. The biggest shift in a positive direction was in the position of MSBA: that in a negative direction involved the governor's staff. When it came to being the "personally" single most useful source, only four groups in 1979 received two or more nominations: staff persons (four), MSBA (four), Department of Education (three), and MEA (two).

Legislative Influences

Countless influences and forces are at play when the Minnesota legislature enacts school policy. Legislator respondents in 1973 and 1979 were asked to assess the involvement and impact of four presumably important actors: school interest groups, the governor's office, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Education.

"State legislators," Patterson has observed, "typically rate education groups as among the most powerful and influential interest groups in state politics."[33] As described earlier, the perceptual data from Minnesota certainly support this generalization. Nearly all respondents in both 1973 and 1979 ranked the school lobby, as a collectivity, as either "the top group" or "among the top groups." Legislators, too, were in substantial agreement about which organization was the most powerful: the MEA followed by the MSBA and MFT. As for the sources of teacher power, these were identified as large memberships, statewide organization, campaign "clout," and effective lobbyists; for the MFT there also was the affiliation with the AFL-CIO. The School Boards Association was seen as relying on the status and connections of its members, its broad organizational base, and the capacity to supply relevant information.

Gubernatorial involvement with the legislature has also been discussed, specifically with reference to the two main school policy initiatives that came from the governor's office during the decade. Traditionally, governors in Minnesota have not been powerful legislative actors. "In Minnesota, more than in most other places," Brandt writes, "the legislature sets its own agenda instead of reacting chiefly to the governor's proposed agenda."[34] This observation certainly fits Quie's K-3 efforts in the '79 session. DFL legislative leaders, especially in the House, were never deflected from their own agendas, and these leaders, not Quie, fashioned the winning coalition. Governor Anderson's push, however, for tax-school finance reform was an exception to the traditional pattern; for on that issue the Governor emerged as the principal initiator. Yet even if Anderson's leadership were necessary to achieve a policy breakthrough, it was not sufficient. Without the solid backing of DFL legislative leaders, bipartisan support in the Senate, and concessions to House Republicans, there would not have been reform legislation.

As for the State Board of Education and the Department of Education, their legislative impact was modest. Despite increased effort and improved communication, the State Board had only marginal independent influence in the legislature; in the words of one '79 lobbyist, it was "barely a player" in this arena. Most legislator respondents in 1979 as well as 1973 ranked the State Board as only a "minor participant."

More of a legislative force was the Department of Education. Commissioner Casmey was widely viewed by respondents as having success with half or more of his legislative programs, some power to oppose education bills effectively, and a capacity to provide through the Department useful data and analysis, with the last of these being seen as the Commissioner's main source of policy influence. House and Senate respondents in 1979 did differ in their assessments of this influence, with the former being much more positive than the latter, a small group of DFL Senators being particularly critical of the Department.

Besides the lobbying of organized interests, there were broader forces that influenced school policy legislation. To test legislator perceptions of these forces, they were asked to rate the importance of six "basic conflicts" when "the major school finance bill" was being considered by the legislature. Using the scale--"great" = 5; "moderate" = 3; and "slight" = 1--produced the importance ratings in the form of average (mean) scores shown in Table 18.

The 1979 respondents, compared with those in 1973, did not accord nearly as much significance to regional differences; instead, they rated partisan conflicts as being the most important. Many education lobbyists, it should be noted, also mentioned the "political" nature of school spending issues in the '79 session. In fact, the PTSA's lobbyist wrote in summarizing the session that "it was the first time (partisan) politics entered into educational issues."[35]

TABLE 18

CONFLICTS ON MAJOR SCHOOL FINANCE BILL AS RATED BY LEGISLATIVE LEADERS

Type of Conflict	Legislator Ratings 1973 (N=15)	 1979 (N=15)
Political Party	2.8	3.7
Governor's Supporters vs. Governor's Opponents	3.1	3.2
Regional	4.1	2.3
Wealthy vs. Poor Districts	2.5	2.1
Ideological	3.1	1.3
Business vs. Labor	2.5	.4

Policymaking Changes

Table 19 shows the responses, grouped by general categories, that legislators and lobbyists gave in 1979 to their final interview question: "What major changes, if any, have occurred in the process through which state government makes school policy in the last five or six years?" Their responses, along with answers to questions about the legislative committee structure and functions of legislative staff , provide a set of concluding perceptions on how the policymaking process for the public schools changed in Minnesota during the decade of the seventies.

Legislators often are portrayed as simply the targets of policy influence, with their behavior being the reaction to demands from organized interests, executive agencies, party leaders, and, on occasion, angry voters. Such a simplistic pressure group perspective tends to ignore the initiative and power exerted by legislators themselves in the decision process. And it was precisely this initiative and power that our '79 respondents pointed to most frequently as the biggest single change in state school policymaking in Minnesota.

The role of the state legislature in school governance had so expanded over the decade that it was often seen as pre-empting the authority of other officials, notably those in the education agency and local district. Several respondents advanced the thesis: "The legislature is now the state school board." "It is into everything," said one lobbyist. In accounting for this fundamental gravitation of power, legislators and lobbyists emphasized the full-time involvement of many lawmakers and the

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TABLE 19

CHANGES IN STATE SCHOOL POLICYMAKING, PERSPECTIVES OF LEGISLATORS AND LOBBYISTS

General Category*	Legislators (N=11)	Lobbyists (N=11)	1979 Totals
The legislature, and individual legislators themselves, acting as initiator in state school policymaking	6	7	13
Growth in the number and skills of legislative staff	5	4	9
Process of legislative policymaking becoming more open and visible	3	6	9
Proliferation of narrow-based interest groups in school policymaking	5	4	9
Expanded information base and analytic capability	3	2	5
Concentration of legislative power in fewer decision arenas and persons	2	3	5

*Coded from an open-ended question.

growth of their staffs. Even more important, in the judgment of some respondents, were the "personalities of the players."

From 1973 through the end of the decade, a "handful" of legislators, mostly DFLers, had the committee positions, specialized knowledge, and political savvy to exercise decisive leadership on school policy issues. These lawmakers were widely perceived by our '79 respondents as capable, hard working, and most tellingly, "very strong willed." Working closely with their staffs, legislative leaders actively sought to identify problems, initiate policies, and formulate bills, as well as to play the more passive role of deciding upon the proposals of others.

To build support for their ideas, legislators at times engaged in energetic lobbying, trying to mobilize both their legislative colleagues and interested organizations. A good example of this was the lobbying undertaken by Willis Eken, Chairman of the House Schools Aids Division, in the 1979 session. His coalition building efforts on behalf of the Division's school aid bill were extensive, skillful, and effective. In the end, this "tenacious" legislator not only helped blunt Governor Quie's K-3 policy thrust but also wrought a favorable compromise in conference committee bargaining from his DFL Senate counterpart.

Chairman Eken's influence on school finance legislation illustrates a concern of several respondents--namely, the concentration of power in the policy system. In reaching this conclusion, respondents apparently had in mind the specialization of school decision-making within the legislature by committee and by person. Any legislative body confronted by a multitude of demands and having scarce time and information resources must specialize to undertake its policy responsibilities. In Minnesota this meant a strong committee structure. Respondents generally saw the foci of school legislation as being the education committees; they were repeatedly identified as very powerful in the process. The central component of these committees were the subcommittees delegated the authority to develop the school finance bill: the School Aids Division of the House and the Subcommittee on Education Aids of the Senate. These two subcommittees became the principal formulators of school spending policy. Although their work needed approval by the full education committees and "money" committees in each house, these approvals, especially by the latter, were largely *pro forma*. And the school finance "package" developed by the subcommittee usually passed their respective legislative branch without serious modification.

With respect to growing committee power, respondents noted another marked characteristic of 1970s school legislation, this being to put together sweepingly inclusive "omnibus bills." Such bills, it was argued, enhanced the power of the education committee and its subcommittees. "An omnibus bill," observed one lobbyist, "forces the House Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees to look at the whole mess at once." Also, the omnibus approach meant that a broad-based coalition could be built as many individuals and groups received "a piece of the action" in exchange for their support. Once such a coalition had been formed, it was unstoppable—or at least it was unstoppable until it collided with the coalition developed in the other house. At this point, the legislative process reverted once again to small-group bargaining to fashion a conference committee bill to be submitted to the House and Senate for their final approval.

House and Senate rivalry over state school policy often was intense; it overshadowed in most sessions any form of partisan division. As many respondents viewed it, the education committees in each house had evolved distinctive "styles" of operation . Among the lobbyists who elaborated on this distinction, the House Education Committee and its School Aids Division were described as having the more orderly approach to policy formation, emphasis on consensus within the committee, and systematic use of computer-generated information to assess policy options. The Senate committees, on the other hand, tended to be perceived as more fluid and open to diverse alternatives. (The "market basket" approach was the label applied by one '79 lobbyist.) The Senate's operating style also was seen as reflecting "more chiefs" than the House. Whether the result of these differences or not, virtually every session witnessed House-Senate disagreements on school policy issues, thus the need for a conference committee to resolve these disagreements.

The constant resort to the conference committee worried several of our respondents. The conference committee, in their opinion, furthered the concentration of power in legislative policymaking. Partly this was because the conference committee contributed to ever more complicated and inclusive omnibus bills, bills that in such areas as school finance were all but unintelligible to the average legislator. Concentration was fostered more directly by the modus operandi of the conference committee. This modus operandi, most noticeable in 1979 in the bargaining over school aids, was negotiation among a few leaders as to the content of the final compromise. Within the constraints imposed by the need for eventual House and Senate approval, conference committee members could add or delete bargaining items as they wished. While these typically were minor or narrow-interest provisions, this was not always the case. The 1977 statutory requirements for comprehensive school district planning, for example, came from items developed by a school aids conference committee, items that had never been fully discussed, let alone passed, in either house.

The preceptions of both legislator and lobbyist respondents in this study certainly confirm the general observation of Mitchell:

> There are never more than a half dozen legislators in any one state who even understand the complexities of issues like school finance or labor relations or special education, much less take responsibility for leading in the articulation of new policy in the area.36

Judging from the '79 interview responses, the "half dozen" (actually eight) legislators who most determined state school policy in Minnesota were the education committee chairmen (Senator Jerome Hughes and Representative Carl Johnson), the school aid subcommittee chairmen (Senator Gene Merriam and Representative Willis Eken), the ranking minority members of the education committee (Senator Douglas Sillers and Representative Gerald Knickerbocker), and two school finance specialists (Senator Jerald Anderson and Representative John Tomlinson). Of these lawmakers, the two individuals who had the most pervasive impact were the chairmen of the education committees.

Both Jerome Hughes and Carl Johnson had long tenure (since 1973) as education committee chairmen. Both had become personally and actively involved on a broad range of school issues. Though sometimes on opposing sides, both were considered to be strong supporters of education. And each had advocated a particular policy thrust with such determination as to be portrayed by the media as the "father" of the ensuing legislation: Hughes for the establishment of an expansive pilot program in early childhood and the family education; Johnson for the planning, reporting, and evaluation (PER) requirements for local school districts. Many of our respondents believed that the way the policy system worked depended ultimately on the legislators who served in key committee positions; that when the chairman changed, one lobbyist concluded, "everything else changed."

Supporting the power of committee chairmen were the staffs that served their committees. The influence of staff persons in school policymaking was identified by many '79 respondents as a growing trend. Legislative leaders depicted the staff role as essentially confined to providing information, data, and analysis; activities that they argued made them more "independent" of lobbyists, and gave legislators their own capability to formulate and monitor policies. Several legislators saw the basis of this capability to be staffs' "access to computers." Lobbyist respondents described the role of staff somewhat differently than did legislators. While the information-generating function was recognized, lobbyists also perceived staff functions to include pointing out problems with proposals, formulating bills, "keeping legislators out of trouble," and acting as "screens" which lobbyists and even legislators had to go through to get their policy ideas accepted by committee chairmen. Several lobbyists cited the old axiom that "knowledge is power," indicating that staff through this resource was able to "guide" legislative decisions. Lobbyists, for the most part, expressed no unhappiness with this situation; legislative staff was generally assessed by these respondents to be competent, informed, and influential in deciding school policy, and as working closely with lobbyists as well as legislators.

Typically, legislative policymaking did reflect the politics of small numbers. In some arenas--for example, pre-conferee meetings between House and Senate committee chairmen--these numbers became as few as two legislators. Yet the elitism inherent in this process was tempered in Minnesota by several significant conditions. The "opening up" of the legislative process to public view had been extended by the mid-1970s to even the conference committee sessions. And many legislator and lobbyist respondents, though noting instances of bargaining behind the scenes, pointed to the increased visibility of decision-making as contributing to the public accountability of lawmakers. Also, as lobbyists emphasized, there were many formal and informal points to access to the policy system. As one respondent saw it: "The political process in decision-making has been opened up so wide that almost anyone, at any level, can be heard." For lobbyists, it apparently was "easy to get to legislators and talk to them." Nor were legislators "locked into" policy positions; they generally were receptive to new information and innovative ideas; some energetically sought them out. Mention was made, in this regard, of expanded contacts and communications between legislators and their constituents on school issues. "Legislators are listening to their people," concluded one lobbyist respondent.

Another trend identified by many of our '79 respondents was the proliferation of highly organized groups seeking to "penetrate" the legislative process. The rapid expansion of the interest group arena made some legislators as well as some lobbyists quite apprehensive. In their estimation, nearly all the newly activated groups were mobilized around narrow sets of interests, a narrowness ("tunnel vision") that they brought to education policy issues. Furthermore, these groups, as a collectivity, were described as having "clout."

"Single interest groups," one lobbyist argued, "make legislators very vulnerable, because these groups are so well organized that they can bring about the demise of a politician in the next election." Whether or not these groups had such electoral power, their expanding presence and continuous pressure did cause some respondents to predict an escalation of special interest legislation, especially under the protective umbrella of omnibus bills, and to express doubts about the ability of the state policy system to take an overall perspective on school legislation. Such a perspective, it was suggested, is a major challenge facing legislative leadership in the 1980s.

CHAPTER III

THREE STATE SCHOOL POLICY ISSUES

A twofold approach was used to investigate the process through which Minnesota state government determined school policy. In the first (reported in Chapter II), data were gathered on the perceptions that interview respondents had of the policy actors and their influence relationships, with the perceptual data from 1979 being compared with those from 1973. In the second (the subject of this chapter), three policy decisions were studied, with the focus being on the actors and activities that brought the decision about, rather than on its educational content. An effort was made, using our respondents and other experts, to choose the most important state school policy issue from the beginning, from the middle, and from the end of the decade. The three issues, so identified, were school finance reform (1971), school district planning for enrollment decline (1976, 1977), and K-3 educational program improvement (1979). A detailed case study was completed for each of these issues.

The policy issue approach required that information be sought by interviewing selected informants, collecting pertinent documents, and examining published materials. Field work was done in 1972-73 and again in 1978-80. The earlier field work provided the data base for the case study of school finance reform. An account of this study was first published in 1974;* an edited and condensed version constitutes Case I of this chapter. A short analysis of school district planning legislation appeared in a 1979 paper by myself and Van Mueller. A much expanded treatment, with emphasis on the state policymaking process, is Case II of this chapter. Case III rests on primarily new data gathered in 1978-80 by Dean Erickson, who is the author of the analysis of Governor Quie's attempt in the '79 session to pass K-3 legislation.

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*Two other issues--school desegregation policy and teacher certification governance--were also studied for the 1974 report. See Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr., State Policy Making for the Public Schools of Minnesota (Educational Governance Project, 1974).

The three case studies, taken together, offer a different historical perspective on state school policymaking from that provided by a comparison over time of actor perceptions. The cases capture more of the dynamism of policymaking, more of its complexity and subtlety. They give a life to the process that can never be portrayed by static, survey "snapshots." Still, the case study has its own limitations. Our field researchers worked hard. But the difficulties were many, and there are undoubtedly gaps of significance in each account. We do think, however, that enough information was obtained to tell the story and do the analysis, at least in main outline, for every case.

Most of the case study data were amenable only to qualitative treatment, the tests of historical criticism being applied to statements to decide upon their credibility and meaning. The assertions that seemed best supported by the evidence were then drawn upon in doing the analysis of the policymaking process. Such research findings, of course, do not speak for themselves. They always are selected, arranged, and given meaning through interpretation. The analytic framework we used (see the assumptions stated at the beginning of Chapter II) not only gave initial direction to the research (by indicating where to look and what to look for), but also served to organize our thinking about the cases. Yet within its constraints many interpretations were possible. Whether those presented in this chapter are persuasive in terms of logic and evidence is a matter for the reader to decide.

CASE I: TAX AND SCHOOL FINANCE REFORM

In October of 1971, after an abrasive political struggle, the Minnesota legislature enacted comprehensive tax-school finance reform, hailed by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations as a "Minnesota miracle."[1] Before explaining how such innovative legislation came into being, it is necessary to describe briefly the system of state-local school finance that existed in Minnesota prior to 1971.

School Finance Background

Minnesota's foundation aid program had its legislative origins in 1957. The program, essentially, was intended to accomplish two things. First, it set a minimum spending level for school districts, a level to be funded from both state and local sources. Theoretically, this guaranteed dollar figure represented the cost of providing an adequate basic education. To participate fully in the foundation aid program, a district had to levy a tax at least as high as the state-specified minimum rate. Then the revenue yield from this local levy was subtracted from the amount necessary to support the basic expenditure level to determine how much state foundation money the district would receive. For 1970-71, the foundation level for maintenance costs (current operating expenditures) was $404 per pupil unit in average daily attendance (ADA)* and the required district tax rate was 20 EARC mills.**

To finance their ever-mounting expenditures, school districts depended upon their own property wealth, as well as upon foundation entitlements and other state and federal assistance. Some 43 percent of district maintenance costs in 1970-71 represented the state contribution, with the balance largely coming from local levies. Throughout the 1960s the dollar gap between the actual operating expenditures of Minnesota school districts and the level established for their foundation support grew wider until by 1970-71 the median maintenance cost per ADA exceeded the foundation aid figure by $332.[2] Thus, by 1970-71, the foundation formula had become quite unrealistic. Few districts spent less than the $404 base; none taxed at a rate as low as 20 EARC mills. And as foundation outlays failed to keep pace with soaring educational costs, their potential for equalization across districts steadily diminished.

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*Per pupil units reflect a "weighting" scheme. In 1970-71, each kindergarten pupil was multiplied by a factor of .5, each 1-6 pupil by a factor of 1.0, each 7-12 pupil by a factor of 1.4, and each pupil in area vocational-technical schools by a factor of 1.5.

**EARC stands for Equalization Aid Review Committee. Its purpose is to "equalize" assessed valuations from county to county.

The second purpose of foundation aid was to compensate for variations in property wealth among Minnesota school districts. The general principle was that the poorer the district the more aid it was to receive. Yet there also were provisions for flat grants that were distributed to districts regardless of their financial ability. The most remunerative of these grants was a minimum pupil unit guarantee ($141 per district in 1970-71), which was calculated as an element in the foundation formula. This meant that a school district, notwithstanding its property wealth, was entitled to at least $141 per pupil unit in state assistance.* Such grants represented some 48 percent of foundation program outlays, while the equalization grants made up 33 percent of state payments to school districts.[3]

Minnesota's foundation program, other than the minimum guarantee provision, did allocate state aid in an inverse relationship to the tax base of local school districts. In 1970-71, the correlation between total state aid per pupil and EARC valuation per pupil unit was -.67.[4] Even so, there was virtually no association (r only .13) between state aid and local tax effort, and large expenditure disparities existed among school districts.[5] In refusing to dismiss a suit that challenged the Minnesota school finance program (Van Dusartz v. Hatfield), U. S. District Judge Miles Lord concluded:

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*The guarantee was adjusted downward if a district spent or taxed less than required by the foundation aid formula. This formula in 1970-71 was ($404 per pupil unit in ADA) - (Revenue from 20 mills, .020, times EARC valuation) = (State aid payment, with a guaranteed minimum of $141).

> To sum up the basic structure, the rich districts may and do enjoy both lower tax rates and higher spending. A district with $20,000 assessed valuation per pupil and a 40 mill tax rate on local property would be able to spend $941 per pupil; to match that level of spending the district with $5,000 taxable wealth per pupil would have to tax itself at more than three times that rate, or 127.4 mills.[6]

Besides foundation outlays and flat grants, Minnesota's school finance program incorporated various categorical payments. This form of state school aid (some 20 percent of the total) was distributed primarily to reimburse a portion of local expenses for pupil transportation, educative services for the handicapped, and vocational-technical programs. Additionally, categorical grants were provided to meet special school district needs, such as those resulting from depleted iron ore deposits, military installations, and concentrations of children from AFDC families. The last of these was only a small grant of $500,000 in 1970-71, and it went almost entirely to the two Twin Cities.[7]

As for revenue raising, Minnesotans in 1970-71 were making a very substantial state-local tax effort to support the public schools. Some 36 percent of overall state tax receipts went for this purpose, and heavy emphasis was placed on the property tax, the source of virtually all locally-raised school revenue. Property taxes in Minnesota, as elsewhere, had shot upward in the latter part of the 1960s. Gross property taxes rose at an average annual rate of 15 percent from 1966 to 1971, an increase that was double the comparable rate for the decade preceding 1966.[8] As for school property taxes, they went up by some 83 percent between 1968 and 1971.[9] A Citizens League survey, conducted in 1971 in the Twin Cities

Metropolitan Area, found that property taxes had jumped sharply over the course of just a single year for nearly all homeowners in that area.[10]

Not only were the residents of Minnesota school districts asked to bear a heavy property tax burden, they were also caught up in a bewildering maze of state-imposed levy limitations. As described in a State Department report:

> Previously (prior to the 1971 legislation) districts levied property taxes at whatever level they were permitted by state law and their constituencies to provide the education for their children. Very little consistency existed statewide. Districts with low property valuation had to levy high taxes to provide moderate cost programs. High property valuation districts could provide high cost programs with low taxes, but in many cases their potential expenditures were restricted by state-imposed levy limitations. The levy limitations, themselves, varied from two different statewide formulas to a host of differing limitations in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, Duluth, and Rochester.[11]

Such was the tax and school finance situation, in broad outline, that confronted Minnesota lawmakers at the beginning of 1971.

The Gubernatorial Campaign of 1970

Escalating property taxes gave impetus to a broad-based demand for change in Minnesota's fiscal policy. Although there were school administrators, finance scholars, and civic leaders who had long been critical of the state school aid program, the overriding public concern was taxes. In 1967 there had been a legislative response, the Tax Reform and Relief Act. It established a general sales tax for the first time in Minnesota, with some revenue being designated for payments to school districts. The

Act also ended local taxation of business personal property. School districts were reimbursed some $40 million each year to compensate for this loss. Lastly, the 1967 law enacted a "homesteader's credit" of 35 percent of the real estate tax up to a $250 maximum.[12]

The Tax Reform and Relief Act did not prevent a steep rise in property taxes. Within a few years the signs of public discontent were everywhere to be read. School districts especially felt the wrath of taxpayers. Board meetings often were jammed with citizens questioning budget items, and school district officials experienced growing difficulties in winning bond elections.[13] Gerald Christenson, Director of the State Planning Agency, recalled that:

> We couldn't have continued on as we were--there would have been an explosion in Minnesota, a backlash which I think would have greatly damaged education in this state. You could see it coming: In Bloomington there were over 1,000 irate taxpayers who showed up at a school board meeting to insist that the school costs be cut; in Western Minnesota serious efforts took place to organize a taxpayers' revolt.[14]

The combined issue of taxes and school finance took shape during the 1970 campaign for governor. Both candidates--Wendell R. Anderson, a DFL Senator from St. Paul, and Douglas E. Head, the Republican Attorney General--sought from the outset to find a politically attractive tax posture. Anderson, in particular, demanded "real" tax relief, denouncing the 1967 law for its shortcomings. School finance, however, did not surface publicly as a concomitant of the tax question until the middle of the campaign. This occurred not because of candidate initiative; rather, the Citizens League took several actions to which both Anderson and Head felt they had to respond.

In the summer of 1970, the League issued a report on "New Formulas for Revenue Sharing in Minnesota."[15] Its recommendations were numerous, but emphasis was placed on the need to expand state school support "up to the average per pupil unit operating expenditure in each region" and to devise a more equitable basis for foundation aid allocation. Along with the report, the Citizens League provided a forum for the two gubernatorial candidates to respond:

> The Citizens League report...was issued actually in mid-summer. It did not immediately, at that point, stimulate a large discussion: it was one of a number of proposals known to and discussed by the relatively small group of persons involved with the arcane business of school finance. It became a political issue on October 1, 1970, during and after the Citizens League annual meeting dinner. The League had decided to have its annual meeting in St. Paul and--for the program--invited the two candidates for Governor to respond to questions from a panel of very good Citizens League members on major state and metropolitan issues. After some negotiations...both Head and Anderson agreed to appear...and were questioned in a most sophisticated way...In the course of responding to one of the questions, Anderson stated his support for the concept of state assumption of responsibility for school finance mentioned in the League report...and in some important respects went beyond what was proposed in the League report. The Republicans...met after the session to review Anderson's comments and decided he was vulnerable on the school finance/property tax issue. Their public attack began the next day, and from there on it became the major issue of the gubernatorial campaign.[16]

Why had Anderson chosen to take an advanced position on school finance? As one political adviser remembers it, "the decision to embrace the thrust of the report was not seen by anyone as a major decision."

"This was so," he added, "because Head was also expected to support the main ideas of the Citizens League."[17] Furthermore, the Anderson forces apparently believed that an issue like legislative session reform could have more electoral payoff. Then came the "bombshell" when Head expressed misgivings about the League's proposal. When Anderson suggested that a statewide property tax, replacing local mill levies, be used to fund his plan to more than double state school aid, the battle between him and Head was squarely joined. The Republican candidate vigorously objected to both total state financing and a statewide property tax. Throughout the ensuing barrage of charges and countercharges, it was evident that taxes, not state aid to schools, had primacy. This fact, perhaps more than any other, shaped the process and outcome of the 1971 legislative session.[18]

While the emergence of the school finance issue had about it something of the character of a political accident, there were several factors that contributed to Anderson's receptivity to the issue. First, a few DFL leaders had been concerned for years with inequities in the foundation formula. Notable among them was Karl Grittner. This DFLer, a high school principal in St. Paul, had capped a long legislative career by serving as Senate Minority Leader from 1966 to 1970. A sponsor-protégé relationship had developed between Grittner and Anderson from the time the latter entered the legislature in 1958 as a fledgling politician. And as Anderson moved to the forefront in DFL party politics, Grittner continued to be a confidant.[19] Besides counsel from men like Grittner, Anderson was alert to events in other states. Gerald Christenson wrote that:

> I asked Governor Anderson how he became committed to the idea that the state ought to provide almost all, or all, of the finances for elementary and secondary schools. He said that he had read an article regarding Governor Milliken's efforts in Michigan to get the state to take over a far greater portion of the educational load of that state and was impressed with the argument. He began to study the situation in Minnesota and saw the tremendous disparities that existed...[20]

In any case, the Citizens League report put the spotlight on the state school aid program, and out of well-publicized exchanges between two gubernatorial candidates, the tax-school finance issue took on definition. These events, it should be added, occurred nearly a year before the famous Serrano school finance decision in California.

Formulating the Policy Alternatives

Wendell Anderson won the 1970 election with 54 percent of the vote and began the task of formulating a budget message. If the Governor and his supporters were certain of anything, it was that their main campaign pledge had to be honored. Republican leaders had been declaring for months that Anderson's proposals were so unworkable that he would be forced to back away from them. This Anderson was determined not to do; in January, 1971, he offered his "Fair School Finance Plan" to the legislature. It called for:

- shifting most of the operating costs of the public schools, K-12, from local property revenues to state nonproperty sources, with the recommended state share being 70 percent by 1972-73.
- setting the foundation aid level at $780 for 1971-72, and $819 for 1972-73 (the estimated statewide district expenditure averages), with the deductible EARC millage rate being 40 in the first year, 33 1/3 in the second;

- raising the minimum pupil unit guarantee to $215 in 1971-72 but eliminating it thereafter;
- reducing state aid payments to districts which levied taxes above the foundation-required minimum by as many dollars as these excess taxes raised (But districts could raise additional revenue if voters approved in a referendum.);
- allowing through a "grandfather" clause above-average expenditure districts to tax at whatever millage rate was necessary to maintain their existing expenditures, plus cost-of-living increases;
- allowing below-average districts to tax at a millage rate that over a six year period would bring them up to the statewide average;
- giving the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth additional foundation aid in 1972-73 (not 1971-72) by setting their deductible EARC mills at 28 1/3, not 33 1/3;
- using per pupil units in ADA, as weighted in 1970-71, to distribute state school aid;
- eliminating the provisions of the Tax Reform and Relief Act which earmarked school district payments from the sales tax as reimbursements for districts not being able to tax business personal property.[21]

Anderson requested a $3 billion budget for the biennium, with $762 million representing new money ($390 million for the public schools), most of which to be raised by increasing personal and corporate income taxes.[22]

In formulating the "Fair School Finance Plan," Governor Anderson relied upon trusted advisers organized into an ad hoc committee. Serving primarily as a source of technical advice were John Haynes, Staff Assistant to the Governor, and Gerald Christenson, Director of the State Planning Agency. Haynes was knowledgeable in the tax field; Christenson had just completed research on school finance. Offering political insights were several DFL legislators--such as Karl Grittner, Senate Minority Leader until his retirement in 1970, and Martin Sabo, Minority Leader in the House for the 1969 and 1971 sessions--as well as the Governor's campaign manager, David Lebedoff.[23]

In describing policy formulation by the Governor's Office, it is important to note the kinds of individuals who were not involved, as well as those who did take part. Conservative Harvey Sathre, Chairman of the House Education Committee and dominant influence on school finance in prior sessions, was completely ignored. The role of the Department of Education was largely confined to the generation of "raw data." The Commissioner of Education was not a participant in the main policy decisions. Neither was the State Board of Education, although the Commissioner later claimed that the "ideas" for the Governor's reform proposal came from the State Board.[24] The school interest groups, with the possible exception of the MFT and the Minneapolis school district, also had little active involvement with development of the Governor's plan.[25]

All of this represented a significant departure from previous sessions in which the House Education Committee, through its subcommittee on state aids, had drawn up the formula for elementary-secondary school funding within the framework of understandings reached with the various money committees. Key legislators on the Education Committee, such as Sathre, had worked closely with the Department of Education in making adjustments to the foundation aid program. While many interest groups had access to the committee, the MSBA was probably the most influential; its views being sought on all proposed changes.[26] Prior to 1971, then, the House Education Committee functioned as the principal "locus of accommodation" on the school finance issue in Minnesota, its proposals being the ones to which the legislature paid heed.

The Governor's proposal set both the fiscal and programmatic agenda for the 1971 session, but Minnesota lawmakers were by no means passive in their response to this initiative. At one time during the regular session there were six separate bills dealing with the tax-school aid issue. Five were in the Senate, one was in the House, and all were active simultaneously. The House measure, sponsored by Representative Sathre, proposed only modest alterations in the existing foundation program. And the House Conservative's tax relief solution depended on stringent local levy limitations and the "freezing" at 1971 levels of certain financial payments to local governmental units. The Sathre bill was pushed through the House by the controlling Conservative Caucus and sent on to the Senate.

Of the five bills originating in the Senate, two were akin to the Sathre proposal, though they did stipulate more aid money. A third finance measure was put forward by Senator Wayne Popham, who carried the bill for the Citizens League. Municipal overburden was a central concern of this proposal. It eventually passed the Senate, but no agreement was reached with the House. A more radical tax-school finance bill was introduced near the close of the regular session by Conservative Senator, Jerome Blatz, Chairman of the Tax Committee. It recommended that the entire tax structure be overhauled with the state assuming both welfare costs and 80 percent of school expenditures. Partly because of its complexity, the Blatz proposal did not receive much attention. Lastly, there was the Governor's bill, sponsored by DFL Senator Gene Mammenga. It, too, met defeat during the regular session of the legislature.

The Contending Coalitions

Each school finance bill attracted some legislative support. Still, the primary line of cleavage came to lie between adherents of the Governor's plan and those who backed the position taken by the House Conservatives.

Soon after his budget address, Governor Anderson sought to build grassroots pressure for his proposal by embarking on a speaking tour of the state. This accomplished, Anderson reverted to a low profile stance, giving his capable aides and top DFL lawmakers the task of moving his bills through the legislature. The Governor had a potent asset in a talented and aggressive staff. Chief among these aides was John Haynes who was the Governor's expert on taxes and schools. In addition, he functioned as liaison to the legislature, as well as to the Tax Department and to the Department of Education. Drawing upon these sources, along with data generated by the State Planning Agency, Haynes acquired such a grasp of the tax-school finance issue that DFL legislators leaned heavily upon him for information and so did more than a few influential Senate Conservatives. Haynes also was perceived by legislative leaders as identifying and testing possible trade-offs for the Governor.

Party solidarity was another resource commanded by the Governor. Even though the DFL often had been torn by bitter factional fights, its state lawmakers stayed largely unified behind Anderson throughout the protracted legislative struggle. This unity was due, in part, to the minority status of DFL legislators in both the House (65 to 70) and Senate (33 to 34). The DFLers had to stick together if they were to have much chance of success. Many, too, were newcomers to the legislature; anxious to make an impression and responsive to gubernatorial leadership. Finally, Governor Anderson and his staff held frequent meetings with DFL legislators giving, according to one participant, "DFL legislators...the opportunity to yell and scream at each other out of the sight of TV and news cameras."[27]

While maintaining party discipline was crucial to Anderson, it alone could never have gotten a bill through the legislature. Thus, the situation that had evolved in the Senate was of equal importance. Many of the Conservative stalwarts, who had long dominated the Senate and adamantly resisted changes of the sort proposed by the Governor, had either retired or suffered electoral defeat. Stanley Holmquist had become the Senate Majority Leader. He was a personal friend of Anderson's and, like some other Conservative Senators, shared the Governor's reformist philosophy. Hence, proposals coming from the Governor's Office often enjoyed considerable bipartisan support in the Senate. This was in sharp contrast to the House where the Conservative Caucus was effectively able to block DFL tax-school finance reforms.

Many educator organizations were aligned with the Governor. But their role in the legislative process does not appear to have been very influential. The MFT did favor more equitable school aid to be financed by a statewide property tax.[28] And the MEA also voiced approval of the Governor's proposal, albeit "with reservations" on the local limitation features.[29] Both teacher organizations, however, devoted more of their influence resources to collective bargaining and a professional standards board, rather than the school finance issue. As for the Department of Education, it generated voluminous data on school district taxes and expenditures.[30] Yet the Department gave no policy direction to the process. The same can be said about the Commissioner of Education, whose role was principally one of enlisting support for the equalization thrust. The organizations that added the most political weight to the Governor's side, at least on tax questions, were not the school interest groups. Rather, they were the traditional DFL power bases: the Minnesota AFL-CIO and the Farmers Union.

Spearheading the rival coalition was the Conservative Caucus in the House. Their confrontation with Anderson had strong partisan overtones, with some members of the Caucus declaring openly that they were going to "break the Governor" politically by thwarting his major programs. Yet there also were Conservative Representatives--notably Ernest Lindstrom, the Majority Leader of the House--who adhered to a philosophy of fiscal conservatism and who were obviously alarmed by what they saw as a "spend, spend, spend" budget. In fact, Lindstrom traveled from town to town across the state as a one-man "truth squad," proclaiming that the Governor's program for tax relief was a fraud; that "the real dollar saved is the one not spent." Sustained by his caucus, the Majority Leader was determined to trim drastically the Anderson budget. Lastly, there were influential rural legislators such as Harvey Sathre and Aubrey Dirlam, House Speaker, who were outspoken critics of the Governor's school foundation formula, contending that it unfairly discriminated against the outstate districts which had high-value farm lands but residents with only modest incomes.[31]

Antagonisms were evident during the session not only between DFLers and Conservatives in the House, but also between the latter and their fellow party members in the Senate. House Conservatives bitterly assailed Senate Conservative leaders, especially Stanley Holmquist, for being "in bed" with the Governor. Conversely, many Senate Conservatives came to believe that House Conservatives were both unrealistic and intransigent.[32]

Joining with the House Conservative Caucus were other powerful groups that sought to blunt the Governor's policy thrust. The lobbyists for business and banking interests attacked proposals to raise the corporate income tax, claiming that such taxes would drive business from the state, inhibit economic expansion, and foster unemployment. Officials from high expenditure school districts were apprehensive about excessive equalization as well as about local levy restrictions. The MSBA actively, though unofficially, worked against such restrictions, seeing them as a basic threat to the "local control" of schools. And rural-oriented groups expressed much suspicion about the urban bias they attributed to Anderson's proposals.[33]

Decision by the Tax Conference Committee

After months of futile regular and special session deliberations on taxes and school finance, an agreement was hammered out in mid-October of 1971 at the Governor's mansion by a ten-member Tax Conference Committee, appointed at Anderson's request by the legislative leadership of both houses. This agreement had sufficient DFL and Conservative backing to win approval from the legislature, and it was signed into law by Governor Anderson, who hailed it as a satisfactory compromise.

The legislative road to compromise had been long and tortuous. Following the Governor's budget message in late January, 1971, little happened for some four and one-half months. Then the House Conservatives pushed through the Sathre bill, while the Senate adopted the measure introduced by Wayne Popham. No agreement was reached between the two houses and the legislature went into special session. Here the House enacted another measure similar to the existing foundation program, plus new and restrictive local expenditure limitations. The Senate passed a "Senate Summit Bill" sponsored by the Conservative leadership and approved by the Governor. A conference committee endorsed the House version and this measure was accepted by a weary legislature in late July. At this point, the Governor moved dramatically back into the public limelight. He vetoed the Conservative tax bill, castigating it in searing language for its failure to grant tax relief or to remedy gross inequities. When the session reconvened, the Tax Conference Committee set to work on a virtually non-stop basis and after seven days a complicated "package" of trade-offs had been put together for final enactment, which came on October 30, 1971.

Unwilling to give in on the tax relief issue, Governor Anderson had drawn upon his formal powers to call special sessions and to veto bills in order to force a legislative situation where a favorable compromise was likely to be forthcoming. Conservative lawmakers had no prospect of overriding his veto and each passing day intensified public pressure for a settlement. Time became an especially scarce resource when the State Auditor, a Republican, warned that as of November 15, the state would run out of money unless a tax measure were adopted.[34] Public opinion polls indicated that the Governor's veto had popular support and the House Conservatives' opposition to tax-school finance reform was further undercut by an opinion rendered by U. S. District Judge Miles Lord.

Three suits had been filed in the federal district court in St. Paul. The MFT, apparently after consulting with the Governor's Office, filed the first. Subsequently, actions were brought by the Van Dusarzes, whose children were students in a suburban (White Bear Lake) school district, and by the Minnesota Real Estate Property Taxpayers Association. No trial was ever held on these suits; consequently, no binding ruling was issued. Judge Miles Lord, however, was confronted by a motion for dismissal by the State of Minnesota on the grounds that the inequities which existed were not unconstitutional. In response, he wrote a lengthy memorandum which rejected the motion and advanced the opinion that conditions in Minnesota were essentially like those in California; that such a system "which makes spending per pupil a function of the school districts' wealth" violated the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Lord

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concluded by declaring that his court would retain jurisdiction of the case until after the 1971 legislative session.[35] Coming as it did in mid-October, at a time when the Tax Conference Committee was meeting, this opinion could only serve to weaken the Conservatives' position.

The sessions of the Tax Conference Committee were held in the privacy of the Governor's mansion in a "sealed-off world where taxes ruled."[36] Several of Anderson's aides handled the person-to-person bargaining for the Governor, with John Haynes being usually adept, according to participants, in detecting possible accommodations. The pivotal actor among the ten legislative leaders was Stanley Holmquist. A man of boundless exuberance and patience, it was Holmquist that other participants credited with holding the group together when tempers became frayed and compromise seemed impossible. Interest groups, educational or otherwise, had little access to the final negotiations. Surprisingly enough, the only one mentioned by legislators as having an impact was the Minneapolis school district whose legislative liaison through John Haynes was able to get updated AFDC statistics into the bargaining process.[37] And these figures did play a part in the major compromise that was struck on the school finance issue.

While many conflicts had to be overcome in devising a settlement, the basic division on school finance came to be between the big cities and the outstate districts. The Anderson forces had been arguing for a year that Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth had "special problems" that required extra state aid. In his budget address, Governor Anderson requested that the big cities be given a break on the required EARC tax rate for 1972-73, 28 1/3 mills rather than 33 1/3. An alternative approach was later incorporated in the bill developed by the Governor's Office. It gave each pupil from an AFDC family an additional .5 "weighting" in the foundation formula. It was this approach that was at issue during the meetings of the Tax Conference Committee.

Despite the money that would go to poor rural districts from an AFDC provision, many rural legislators insisted on some quid pro quo. Several actions ultimately were taken to mollify the rural interest, the main one being a revision in the agricultural property differential. Minnesota for some forty years had levied a school tax on agricultural lands that was lower by 25 county auditor mills (8 1/3 EARC mills) than the tax rate on other property, with this "ag differential" being absorbed by non-farm homeowners and businesses in the district. The differential was retained in the compromise. But the state was required to compensate the district with a direct payment for the revenue that a 25-mill levy would have yielded.[38]

The main changes in Minnesota's school financing system instituted by the Omnibus Tax Act were these:

1. State aid to schools was substantially increased. The new foundation formula set state aid equal to $600 minus 30 EARC mills in 1971-72, and $750 minus 30 EARC mills in 1972-73. The minimum pupil unit guarantee was set at $215 for both school years.
2. A "hold harmless" clause was included. This said, essentially, that no district would receive less in 1971-72 than it received in 1970-71, nor less in 1972-73 than it received in 1971-72. Sales tax per capita aid was discontinued as was the reimbursement for exempt business personal property. The tax burden of the "ag differential" was shifted to the state.

3. Aid was provided for districts with children from AFDC families. An extra .5 pupil unit was to be added to all public school children who were from AFDC families.

4. Pupil unit computations were to be based on average daily membership (ADM), not on average daily attendance (ADA).

5. School districts that had declining enrollments were allowed to average old and new enrollment figures.

6. A statewide system of school district levy limitations was established. Districts were prohibited from increasing their per pupil current operating costs more than $87 per pupil over the 1971-72 and 1972-73 school years. For above-average expenditure districts that amount was to be reduced by the per pupil special education grants received. A school district could exceed these levy limitations if the majority of its voters approved in a referendum.

7. The use of capital outlay funds was restricted and new limitations were placed on levies for this purpose.[39]

Compared to Anderson's original proposal, the compromise measure established a somewhat lower foundation base and deductible millage rate, as well as a higher minimum pupil unit guarantee, a guarantee that the Governor had initially recommended be terminated entirely in 1972-73. More important, the Omnibus Tax Act did not contain the Governor's key equalization provision which allowed below-average expenditure districts to bring their spending over a six-year period up to the statewide average. But at the Governor's request, the six-year plan was back before the legislature in 1973 and, with the DFL in firm control of both House and Senate, it was readily enacted along with other equalizing provisions (e.g., elimination of flat grant aid) and a greater responsiveness to educational need (e.g., increased aid for districts with a concentration of AFDC children).[40]

From the vantage point of the taxpayer, the 1971 compromise brought far-reaching changes. Governor Anderson did act counter to the DFL's historic opposition to the sales tax, not to mention his own campaign promise, when he accepted an increase from three to four percent. This provided some 26 percent of the $581 million net increase in the $2.8 billion state budget. Even so, just over a third of the new money came from raising the personal income tax; another 25 percent was derived from corporate income or bank excise taxes.[41] Both these increases came from the revenue sources which Anderson had stressed in his initial budget address, with the effect being a pronounced shift in the revenue-raising burden away from residential property and toward income or income-related purchases.

Concluding Observations

Reviewing the events which culminated in the Omnibus Tax Act of 1971 gives rise to several observations. The first concerns the imprint of the "taxpayers revolt." The popular demand for curbing property taxation not only created political pressure for reform, but also constituted the essential backdrop against which legislative bargaining was undertaken. The "costing out" of competing bills became "critical in obtaining support, adopting or eliminating educational provisions, or compromising between educational and non-educational programs."[42] Unsurprisingly, the final compromise was oriented more toward property tax relief, than toward the equalization of school district spending. The discrepancy in public saliency between these two concerns would hardly have permitted any other kind of political result.

A second and related observation is that the politicalization of school finance, as a consequence of its becoming intertwined with the tax issue, radically altered the way in which legislation was enacted in this area. The old triangle of policy influence consisting of the House Education Committee, the Department of Education, and the school interest groups was bypassed in the 1971 session ; and these actors were relegated to the periphery of the decision process. New and powerful participants, such as the Governor and legislative leaders, and different governmental structures, such as the House and Senate Tax Committees, exercised predominant influence.[43]

A third observation has to do with the crucial role of the governor's office in state policymaking. Legislative and bureaucratic initiative had produced modest, incremental changes in the foundation aid program. But without the full commitment of the influence resources of the Governor, it is hard to see how a breakthrough in school finance could have been accomplished, unless it had been mandated by the courts. Anderson and his staff were central to the process from the time the issue was defined to the point where a compromise settlement was negotiated. This does not mean, though, that the Governor's proposals could not have been defeated or drastically modified elsewhere in the legislative system. Without bipartisan support in the Senate and concessions to the House Conservatives, there would not have been reform legislation.

Judicial intervention in state school finance programs is the final point that needs mention. Speaking generally, the courts were policy innovators in the 1970s, forcing lawmakers in many states to consider how the Constitutional standard of equal protection might be met by their school aid programs. There also was such a case in Minnesota (Van Dusartz v. Hatfield) where the Serrano principle of "fiscal neutrality" was proclaimed. Yet the judge's opinion came very late in the process and did not constitute a ruling on the facts. It probably was no more than a contributing factor in the House Conservatives' eventual willingness to compromise. Certainly, it cannot be said that Minnesota achieved tax and school finance reform only, or even primarily, as a result of judicial compulsion.

CASE II: STATE LEGISLATION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING

By the mid-1970s, the decline in public school enrollments (see Chapter 1) had become a pressing policy issue. Responding to this issue, Minnesota state government undertook a wide variety of actions, including legislation aimed at the development of an effective planning capability for its local school districts. The policymaking processes that produced these planning statutes are the primary concern of this case study.

The Minnesota approach to school district planning particularly merits analysis because it differs significantly from the "accountability" and "minimum competency" laws found in most other states.[1] What was prescribed in Minnesota was a process not a product. Local citizens and educators were to retain meaningful choices as to goals, methods, and standards for their schools. But districts no longer had the option of whether or not to plan; it was mandatory. And many categories of the plans were stipulated by law. Nor was planning to be left solely to superintendents and school boards; faculty members and local citizens had to be included in the planning process. Finally, there were provisions for regional plans as well as school district plans. The result, in the words of Commissioner Howard Casmey, was a "unique experiment" in Minnesota education.[2]

Initial District Responses to Enrollment Declines

Traditionally, school district planning in Minnesota was very decentralized. The state's populist heritage emphasized response to public policy problems through an extensive network of local units of government, with school districts being responsible for their own programs. Variations in district planning were seldom of interest to state officials except at a general level of concern for equal educational opportunity, equity in tax burdens, and provisions for financing an adequate education. Whether school districts did or did not plan well, or plan at all, was largely their prerogative. Efforts to reduce variation across districts meant new limits on local authority; therefore, they were generally avoided during the growth period of Minnesota schools.

The decentralized planning system did not respond in either a timely or systematic manner to the onset of declining enrollments. School district policymaking in the late 1960s and early 1970s proceeded in ignorance of what was already known about demographic changes. Little effective early action was taken. Planning was fragmented and based on inadequate data.

Disbelief and avoidance behavior were common, with a reactive problem-solving approach being the initial accommodation to enrollment declines. Planning capability from district to district varied enormously. Neither structure nor process existed to stimulate planning across school district lines. Such was the situation in the mid-1970s when the state began to give legislative direction to this area.

State Policy Enactments

State requirements in Minnesota for school district planning were based on provisions in three separate laws. The first established the Educational Cooperative Service Units; the second specified a process for school district planning, evaluation, and reporting; and the third mandated comprehensive planning by both individual school districts and area task forces. Before describing the planning stipulations of these laws, it is necessary to place them in the broader context of state policy responses to school enrollment declines.

As discussed in the first case study, Minnesota state government enacted major tax-school finance reform in the early 1970s. Understandably, the focus of this legislation was not on declining enrollments. Student numbers were at an all-time high and credible enrollment projections were not available. Still, the fiscal plight of declining enrollment districts was not entirely ignored. Beginning in 1971, a school district where enrollments have declined was allowed a "cushion" in its pupil count for determining state aid entitlement. The original adjustment gave that district additional pupil units, over its actual count, equal to six-tenths (five-tenths in the three largest cities) of the difference between its current and previous year enrollments. Subsequently, the option of three-year enrollment averaging was enacted in 1977; in 1978 this was increased to three and one-quarter years. In addition, state pupil transportation aids were expanded to include funds for the student travel necessary for cooperative programs among local school districts.

Besides financial aids, the legislature passed a number of other laws to ameliorate the impact of enrollment declines. A listing of these includes state statutes amended or created, along with necessary appropriations, to do the following:

1. Increase teacher mobility through provision of extended leaves of absence with re-entry rights, encouragement of part-time assignments, and incentives for early retirement.
2. Encourage experimental education delivery systems by permitting discontinuance of any grades K-12 by one district and the instruction in another paired district of the pupils in the discontinued grades.
3. Extend the deadline for notifying school personnel of their contract status from April 1 to June 1.
4. Establish a Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting System (UFARS) for all local school districts.
5. Create an integrated data base in the Department of Education, along with a management monitoring system to analyze and report these data.
6. Define "statutory operating debt" and require all local districts to operate on balanced budgets.
7. Authorize the Commissioner of Education to provide review and comment publicly prior to any school construction in excess of $400,000.

8. Provide financial assistance to school districts hiring experienced teachers who have been placed on unrequested leave in another district.

Undergirding all these measures, passed largely during the period from 1973 to 1977, was Minnesota's school finance system. This system had emphasized since 1971 the state's primary role in revenue generation and distribution. Generous, stable, and predictable state support provided the necessary base for confronting the policy issues of enrollment decline and mediated against panic-driven cutbacks by local school districts.[3]

Legislative interest in school district planning was first translated into statute in 1976. Early that year, the legislature authorized the establishment throughout the state of Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs). The general purpose of the ESCU was (1) to provide those programs and services to children in participating school districts that could be "better provided" by the regional unit than by the local district; (2) to "perform educational planning on a regional basis." The legislation was basically permissive. School districts had the choice of whether to join an ECSU and, if they joined, they had complete discretion as to which programs and services to purchase. There was, though, one notable exception. All school districts in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area had to "participate in the planning and planning research functions." But the legislation was quick to add: "No planning or planning research decision of that ECSU shall be binding...on these districts." It was in this most tentative fashion that the state legislature began to try to shape the process of school district planning.

A far more directive legislative step was taken near the close of the 1976 session. This step--known as the Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting (PER) legislation--was inserted as a brief inclusion in an Omnibus School Aids Act. Declaring that all Minnesota school districts needed to have "a process for curriculum evaluation and planning," the legislature proceeded to specify such a process. As prescribed by PER, every school board had to have a written education policy; one that set forth goals, a process for achieving them, and procedures for progress evaluation and reporting. Professional staff were to be responsible for formulating an instructional plan, including, if possible, measurable objectives for the policy goals. Where this could not be done, "other appropriate means" were to be used to direct and evaluate progress. School boards also were "encouraged" to solicit active staff and community participation in these planning activities.

Each school district was to conduct annually an overall evaluation of progress, involving evaluation from both professionals (e.g., test results and faculty judgments) and consumers ("opinions of students, parents, and other residents"). These evaluations, along with the educational policy and board plans for school improvement, were to be publicized through media releases and other means, and to be on file available for inspection. School districts had until August, 1979, to comply with the PER requirements. At that time, a report, shared with the local community and adopted by the local board, was to be sent to the State Board of Education.

Planning requirements for Minnesota school districts were extended again in the next session. Once more the legislation came at the end of the session as an amendment to the Omnibus School Aids Bill of 1977. All school districts were given until December, 1978, to formulate a plan for the "efficient and effective delivery of educational programs and services." The plan, directed toward the 1980-83 period, was not only to include the components mandated by the PER legislation, but also to contain enrollment projections, organizational alternatives, financial and staffing requirements and forecasts, facilities and transportation data, and impact statements relating to non-public schools. Concurrently, each ECSU was directed to convene an area educational planning task force, consisting of a member from every school district within the region. This task force was to assess the progress of local district planning and to facilitate interdistrict communications. Its responsibility also was to develop an area plan, containing the same general requirements as mandated for local district plans. The area plans, as well as comments on local district plans, were to be submitted to the Department of Education by June, 1979. The Department, in turn, was responsible for receiving and reviewing all task force reports; then transmitting them to the legislature by September, 1979.

Policymaking Processes

While the state laws providing for school district planning were not independent of one another, each statute did have its own distinctive evolution. For this reason, they will be treated as separate decision processes.

Educational Cooperative Service Units

Regional education service agencies were hardly a new idea in the 1970s; by 1974 a dozen states, including Wisconsin, had created such agencies.[4] From a structural perspective, the regional education service agency was an intermediate unit operating between the state education agency and the local school district. While varying in their service functions, authority relationships, and funding support--depending on the "model" that was implemented--regional agencies typically were intended to "provide much of the economy and service capability of large districts while allowing for flexibility, local controls and direction of individual districts or schools."[5] As established in most states, they were not governmental units; rather, they were voluntary, fee-for-service confederations of local districts, organized on a regional basis.

In Minnesota, the main state-level impetus for the creation of regional service agencies came from Commissioner Howard Casmey and the Department of Education. Despite initial opposition from the State Board--Casmey recalls being "turned down five times" on the issue--the Department by 1971 had included the establishment of ten "regional educational service areas" among its recommendations to the legislature.[6] What was requested, specifically, was legislative authorization for these areas and the funding of a "pilot MESA."[7] This proposal met with no success in the Conservative-controlled legislature. Many outstate legislators, their school board constituents, and the influential School Boards Association had long denounced such regional structures as "superboards" that would destroy local control of schools. In the more urban DFL legislative arena of 1973, the Department fared somewhat better. Although the MESA bill did not pass, the legislature did agree to a "pilot educational service area in southwest and west central Minnesota to provide educational services and programs on a regional basis."[8] Its purpose, in the language of the legislation, was "to assist in meeting specific educational needs of children in participating school districts."[9] No mention, it should be noted, was made of regional planning in this statement of purpose; it was but one of many services to be provided by the ESA.

The Commissioner and Department continued their advocacy of statewide MESA legislation in the 1975 session. By that time several important developments had significantly broadened the base of support for the proposal. The first was the effective functioning of the ESA. Widely acclaimed as a success, this organization by 1975 was supplying to member districts administrative, institutional, and media services, and had embarked on a massive effort in special education.[10] Not only was the regional concept seen as working, but its director and staff, school district clients, and area legislators together made up an influential political constituency for the expansion of the idea.

A second important development was the publication in the summer of 1974 of a report by the Citizens League: "Matching Pupils, Teachers, Buildings, and Budgets." The report projected in vivid terms the "inescapable" decline of public school enrollments in Minnesota and identified five "severe consequences":

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1. "Buildings will stand vacant in some districts, while in nearby growing school districts new construction will take place."

2. "Teaching staffs will become increasingly segregated by age and experience with older teachers located mainly in the declining-enrollment districts and younger teachers mainly in the growing districts."

3. "More specialized curriculum offerings will be placed in jeopardy because of absence of adequate enrollment and/or trained staff."

4. "Declining-enrollment districts, required to dismiss the newest usually lower-paid teachers first, will not be able to reduce costs as fast as state aid will be withdrawn. Increased pressure will develop, therefore, for a higher level of aid per pupil. If teaching staffs are not reduced, pressure will be even greater."

5. "Neighborhood residents and school boards will have more and more conflict over the future of their local schools."[11]

The League report was critical of school district leadership in cooperative planning, particularly stressing that "problems associated with...growth-decline in the metropolitan area have failed to receive adequate broader-than-district attention."[12] Among the reasons given by the League were several relating to organizational structure:

> "Districts seen essentially as separate, unrelated units--Within the metropolitan area, efforts to identify, early, trends in fluctuating enrollment and the implications of these trends for staffing, building, programs, and finances, have been handled almost exclusively on an individual district-by-district basis. Each district is assumed to be responsible for its own geographic area without the context of an overall framework within which each fits."
>
> "Areawide plans for coping with enrollment trends are non-existent--Each school district is legally responsible, of course, for providing education to its own residents. However,

> each district is largely left, by itself, to adjust to the differential growth/decline affecting all districts in the area. The problems of a declining district are thought of separately from those of a growing district nearby. Consequently, no district is able to chart its own course in some rational fashion which relates to the entire region."[13]

Unsurprisingly, given its assessment of problems, the League included in its recommendations a proposal for an "Education Institute for the Twin Cities area." The Institute was to be mandatory for all the metropolitan school districts, to be financed through either legislative appropriations or a metro-wide property tax, and to have the chairperson of its governing board selected by the Metropolitan Council. Cooperative planning was to be among its functions, as was the authority to "review and comment" publicly on all new school construction in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.[14]

The report of the Citizens League received much newspaper comment, was communicated to influential legislators, and became the inspiration for a new State Board of Education proposal. While continuing to advocate MESAs for outstate Minnesota, the State Board developed another recommendation for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, one modeled on the Citizens League's institute idea, and called the Twin Cities Region Educational Service Area (TCRESA). It required mandatory participation in joint planning by all member schools.[15] But this provision held little appeal for either district officials or for legislators, notably Jerome Hughes, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee.

Senator Hughes had become a powerful advocate of the regional service idea, drawing upon such sources as the State Planning Agency, which had developed an informative report and had held a Minnesota Educational Seminar on the topic. Hughes' proposal for Education Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs) was quite similar to the MESA approach. In Hughes' view, "You (don't) have to mandate something that is practical and involves a reasonable approach to the problems."[16] Hughes did concede, however, that the regional unit established for the metropolitan area was likely to differ from outstate units.

While these events were occurring, an existing organization of metropolitan school districts, the Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC) had formulated yet another proposal for a regional unit. The ERDC of the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area was a voluntary organization of area school districts, 41 of 49 districts being members in 1975. From its founding in 1962 until late 1975, when the Board of Directors was expanded to include school board members, the ERDC was directed by school superintendents. It served its member districts by providing, primarily, research studies, management information, developmental activities, and in-service training. Responding to strong leadership initiatives within its organization, as well as to the challenge of the Citizens League report and the prospect of educational service unit legislation, the ERDC became an active participant in the evolution of a regional framework for the metropolitan area.

Part of the ERDC effort was the development of its own plan for a Council for Educational Planning and Services (CEPS). Compared with other proposals, its most distinctive feature called for a policymaking structure where superintendents were to retain a formal role.[17] Although this structure gained little support from lawmakers, the ERDC's lobbying push for a metropolitan unit that was to be governed by a representative assembly and to have some cooperative planning obligations did meet with success.

A third development that influenced the passage of regional service agency bills was a parallel thrust in the legislature aimed at expanding the powers of the Metropolitan Council. Under the statute finally enacted in the '76 session, local units of government--principally municipalities--were required to prepare comprehensive plans consistent with the Council's overall plan for sewers, parks, airports, and transportation facilities in the seven-county Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. School districts had to submit for "review and comment" all plans for construction projects costing more than $200,000. (In original House bill, the Metropolitan Council was authorized to require changes in school district construction plans, but this provision was eliminated in conference committee.)[18] The very thought of "schools being under Metro Council" was disturbing to metropolitan educators, and their apprehension about this legislation caused them to embrace more strongly the idea of a regional services unit, one independent of the Metropolitan Council.

Legislative leaders in the '75 session were beset by an array of competing proposals and acronyms--MESA, ECSU, TCRESA, and CEPS, among others. But, while different in detail, all were intended to provide an organization that encouraged districts in a region to cooperate in planning and other functions.[19] In the Senate, Jerome Hughes authored the major bill; in the House the author and leading proponent was Representative Russ Stanton, a legislator from the area served by the pilot ESA. Although the "superboard fear" was still voiced by outstate school districts and the MSBA, it was countered by the belief that effective regional cooperation might forestall more drastic measures--namely, school district reorganization. In any event, educator support was widespread, with the most influential advocacy coming from the Department of Education, the ESA and its supporters, and the ERDCs from the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area and from elsewhere in the state.

The ECSU legislation passed both houses in 1975. Educational planning on a regional basis had become a "primary purpose," and there was the added stipulation, for the metropolitan area only, that school districts "shall participate in the planning and planning research functions" of the regional unit. But the failure of the House and Senate to reconcile minor differences in their bills prevented the legislation from being enacted in the '75 session. Instead, it was passed in early 1976, with an apparent softening of the metropolitan area planning provision by the inclusion of the sentence: "No planning or planning research decision of the ECSU shall be binding...on these districts." This last deference to "local control" in the planning area was, however, to be superseded by the PER and comprehensive planning legislation coming later in the '76 session and in 1977.

Planning, Evaluation, and Reporting

Unlike the ECSU law, where policy initiation from the Commissioner of Education had expanded over the first half of the decade to encompass diverse educator and legislator supporters, the state statute (PER) that mandated planning, evaluation, and reporting from local districts originated from a narrow set of actors. Indeed, probably more than any major school legislation in the seventies the PER bill is attributable to a single individual: Carl Johnson, Chairman of the House Education Committee. It was Johnson's tenacity in the face of Senate reluctance that in the end produced the legislation. While executive and legislative staffers developed the PER language, based on a Citizens League report, without Johnson's personal commitment and political skill this language never would have become law.

The beginnings of PER date back to the school finance reform legislation of 1971, legislation that enlarged the state's role in funding schools. In the aftermath of this legislation, there was concern in the governor's office, in the State Planning Agency, and among DFL legislative leaders that the state--not the local district--would become the target of school demands; that the state would begin to take "all the heat." And the state officials in 1972 began to discuss how to diffuse the excessive focus on state government. One outgrowth of these discussions was a decision to improve school district fiscal reporting. A position paper, written by the State Planning Agency in 1973, resulted in legislation directing the Department of Education to develop a system of uniform accounting and reporting for school districts (UFARS). A second outgrowth of the 1972 discussions was a decision that local, as opposed to state, accountability be emphasized by concentrating on "the program level in the school building."[20]

Also, in 1972, the Citizens League completed its study of "Accountability in Schools." The report, certainly the most comprehensive done in Minnesota, declared that the "drive for accountability" was "very real, and serious, and urgent;" and that there was a "demand for a results-oriented system of educational accountability."[21] The League called upon the legislature, specifically, to do two things:

1. "...require every school district in the state to establish a process, within each school, for the development of educational goals, and, these once established, to prepare an annual assessment of progress toward the stated goals."
2. "...establish a Center for Management Assistance to help local schools develop objective-setting, assessment and related management skills."[22]

Not only did the League's report provide "much of the background for the PER bill," in the recollection of one state official,[23] but staffers from the House, Planning Agency, and governor's office drew directly upon the report for much of the actual wording of the bill.

The early 1970s had witnessed numerous bills introduced in the legislature "to achieve accountability" for the schools. These bills met with much hostility from the powerful teacher organizations and other school groups. A 1973 bill, for example, backed by the Minnesota Association of Commerce and Industry particularly aroused the ire of MFT, whose lobbyist referred to its "cost effectiveness" provision as "artificial standards... to impose on education management" and expressed fears about its implications for "the human quality of education."[24] Even much milder versions of "industrial" accountability systems, such as the one proposed in late 1975 by the State Board of Education, did little to ease these apprehensions. Accountability had emerged as a divisive issue in the state school policy system; by 1975 there was the real prospect of intense and bitter conflict between legislators and educators over the proper relationship of citizens to schools.

Leadership in the House and Senate had taken different orientations toward the accountability issue. In the Senate, there was a sharp public criticism of school performance from influential legislators, including the Majority Leader, Nick Coleman. And when the Educational Assessment Program of the Department of Education came up in the '75 session for renewed funding, there was much harsh questioning from the Senate School Finance Subcommittee. The Assessment Program, financed by federal as well as state dollars, began statewide in 1972-73 as a testing effort to measure how well a random selection of Minnesota students at different grade levels were performing in reading and mathematics. There also was a "piggyback" option that enabled a participating district to buy expanded assessment data from the Department of Education to be used to determine its own students' strengths and weaknesses. The House agreed to the Department's request for nearly one million dollars to support the Assessment Program and to extend it to other subject areas, but some Senators objected strongly to the generality of the data. What was needed, in their view, was an evaluation to determine "what educational techniques work with particular problems and what doesn't work with these problems."[25] The outcome in 1975 was funding only through June of 1976; beyond that the future of the assessment program looked to be very much in doubt.

It was in these circumstances that Carl Johnson began his personal push to develop, in his words, "an assessment program coupled with some kind of local accountability to the people." In early 1975, he requested the aid of the State Planning Agency. The Agency responded by suggesting as an "implementation possibility" that "the legislature can instruct the State Department of Education to bring in a plan for a complete accountability system at the individual school building level." To prepare the way for an "omnibus approach in the 1977 session," the Agency went on to recommend the funding of pilot projects in four school districts to test out the local decision-making system.[26] Along with its recommendations to Johnson, the Agency sent to the Chairman the documents used in developing them: the Citizens League report, tne Florida "accountability model," and a chapter from a School Finance Reform Report from Oregon. In these documents, especially the League report, were both the supporting rationale as well as specific requirements of PER-type legislation.

Carl Johnson had no grandiose ambitions for his approach to accountability. All he wanted to do, he later recalled at a Citizens League breakfast, was "to require school people and people from the community to get together and decide what they would like to have happen in their schools."[27] Johnson clearly had become worried about mounting public criticism of the schools and the need, as he saw it, for these institutions to regain credibility and support from local citizens.

In a 1976 letter to Speaker of the House, Martin Sabo, Johnson indicated his "very strong feeling that something needs to be done...to review the operation and productivity of our present educational system." The state, in his opinion, had to answer "those questions that are in the minds of 'Mr. and Mrs. Joe Public'":

> Why can't those kids who have graduated from high school address an envelope? Why can't they make change at the cash register? What really is being taught in our schools today?

"It is not that I think there is so little being taught," he wrote Sabo, "but in order to answer those questions, we must be able to point to something we have done..." "And," he added, "...each legislator campaigning this fall needs something to point to in answering to the public's question: 'What are we doing to straighten out this mess in education?'"[28] So, as Johnson saw it, DFL legislators as well as school districts needed an accountability system to restore their credibility with a skeptical public.

Although Johnson's preference for an accountability system was one based on local educators and citizens, there was a point early in

1976 when he became so doubtful of Senate approval--"the Senate has really dug a hole for themselves on this particular issue"--that he suggested the creation of a state education study commission. In fact, the purpose of his letter to Sabo, quoted above, was to get the Speaker to "think about the possibility" of such a commission.[29] Carl Johnson, however, did not give up easily. And a PER bill cleared his committee in March of 1976. Interestingly, the school-based approach of the Citizens League and the State Planning Agency had given way to almost an exclusive district focus. Early drafts of the bill had "encouraged" school boards to "base their school district plan upon individual plans developed by each school building," yet the House bill as finally amended directed this encouragement only to "consultation with staff of each school building."[30] The amended version did, though, require school boards to "provide for active community participation" in the curriculum planning process. And, like earlier drafts, it called for the creation, within the Department of Education, of a special unit (an "Office of Learning Improvement Assistance" in the final House bill) to make technical assistance available to local school districts.[31]

In seeking support for his accountability plan, Johnson and his staff, along with other advocates, met repeatedly with concerned groups. Campbell reports that, according to her sources:

> Numerous meetings were held with teachers, principals, school board members and their representative organizations. The proponents of the bill met with State Department officials and citizen groups. They met and re-met, discussing, explaining and supporting their ideas.[32]

The main source of resistance was not the educator groups; rather it was the Senate Education Committee. From its leaders came criticisms that the PER approach involved too much time, resources, and "paper work," and that it would not provide useful policy information to state or local officials.[33] Some concessions apparently were made to meet their objections. One Senator pointed to wording changes in the "purposes" of PER as one example, noting that they were expanded to include school board decisions as to which services could best be provided by the public schools and which services "can or should be provided by other (community) institutions." This Senator also felt that his concern had strengthened the evaluation component of the bill.[34] But whatever the concessions, they were not sufficient for the idea to win the endorsement of the Senate Education Committee. Consequently, while PER eventually did pass the House, it got nowhere in the Senate.

There remained one last opportunity in the '76 session and that was the conference committee. As one observer remembers it, Johnson and his staff had prepared three successively weakened versions of the bill and when the Senate conferees unexpectedly accepted the second, a modest compromise on Johnson's part, the PER language became a brief inclusion in a complicated "package" of House and Senate trade-offs --the Omnibus School Aids Bill of 1976. This language, it might be noted, removed the mandatory aspect of citizen participation--it, too, was to be "encouraged"--and eliminated entirely the section establishing a new unit in the Department of Education.[35]

Besides Johnson's "sheer perseverance," the other main cause, Campbell argues, of the PER legislation was the absence of significant educator opposition.[36] Even the teacher organizations found the bill to be acceptable, albeit hardly the object of enthusiasm when it was first enacted. "It was the better part of wisdom," said one lobbyist, "to swallow this mild form of accountability so they wouldn't pass something worse." Moreover, he added, "there was actually more good than bad" in the bill. Educators and school boards also were pleased with the local control emphasis of the measure, and many interpreted it as "public relations" not "accountability" legislation. Further, the teachers and other school groups were interested in maintaining a good relationship with the chair of the House Education Committee, a person whose commitment to education as well as political savvy and influence were widely respected by the lobbyists for these groups.

Once PER became state statute, it effectively preempted--as perhaps it was intended to do--the minimum competency issue in Minnesota, an issue that had produced legislation in most states. The Department of Education and State Board of Education had been considering in the mid-1970s the possibility of state-imposed minimum standards for public school students. A study had been undertaken, a "Committee of 21" educators was formed, countless meetings were held, and a survey was conducted of public attitudes--among other actions.

Also, the Department and State Board had prepared a bill to be introduced in the '76 legislative session calling for the establishment of a state school "accountability system." This bill directed the State

Board to define the purpose of public education (K-12), to state general goals and objectives, and to promulgate minimum standards for school districts. Each "local education agency" was to prepare a comprehensive five-year plan, to include demographic data, statements of goals and objectives, a needs assessment, implementation and evaluation procedures, and budgetary information. The State Board was to review each plan and make recommendations as necessary. This bill, however, was not released by the governor's office for consideration by the legislature--probably, because of its prescriptiveness and its cost (the state was to appropriate one and one-half million dollars to provide, along with other things, direct grants to school districts for implementation of the planning process).[37]

All the Board and Department actions became an "exercise in redundancy" after the legislature passed the 1976 PER law. And in 1978, the State Board of Education, which always had serious reservations about mandating statewide minimum competencies, declared that its policy was to "encourage" local school districts to use the PER process "for setting standards and establishing criteria for determining when these standards have been met."[38] As for the legislature, while minimum competency bills continued to be introduced in the late 1970s, these were largely an exercise in symbolic politics; "a cosmetic effort to appear as if something of consequence is being done," as aptly described by one analyst.[39]

Comprehensive Planning

The last step taken by the Minnesota legislature to give state planning direction to local school districts came in 1977. It, too, was the work of a conference committee. But unlike the earlier PER legislation, where a bill had passed the House, the comprehensive planning statute was not discussed until preparations were being made for the conference committee sessions. There had been, however, a controversial Senate bill that created the political impetus for the planning legislation. This bill proposed the reorganization of Minnesota school districts.

At one time, there were thousands of school districts in Minnesota; in 1932, the peak year, there were 7,773 districts.[40] Over the years this number was greatly reduced until by 1977 there were 438 school districts in the state. At that time, district reorganization had not been a state policy issue for a decade. (The 1967 legislature had required that every school district contain a high school within its boundary.) Then Senator Jerald Anderson, a DFLer from North Branch and former Chairman of the Senate School Aids Subcommittee, introduced a bill to reorganize Minnesota districts largely along county lines.[41]

The Anderson bill sought to reduce the number of school districts from 438 to 92. Of these, 86 were to be formed as independent county-wide units. Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Anoka were to be left as intact districts, and there was to be a division of suburban Hennepin County into two units. In his news release, Senator Anderson declared that his aim was to "reorganize school districts...while retaining all existing schools." The bill, Anderson emphasized, called for "administrative reorganization" not "consolidation of schools;" these decisions were to remain with local school boards.[42]

"All we were trying to do," Anderson later told the press, "is to give those kids equal opportunity."[43] The "kids" that the Senator had most in mind were those in Minnesota's many small districts.[44] As Anderson saw it, these districts were experiencing severe financial stress brought on by enrollment declines and escalating costs, and they were finding it increasingly difficult--often impossible--to make adequate course offerings available to their students. Larger districts, with more buildings and teachers, also gave their school boards, according to Anderson, greater "flexibility" in deciding whether to close a school, and which one, or whether to reduce staff.[45] Anderson believed further that most school districts, on their own, had not developed effective means of cooperation on mutual problems. Minnesotans, Anderson declared, wanted the state legislature to "grab the bull by the horns."[46]

But Anderson's courageous effort to prod the legislature to "grab the bull's horns" produced--to continue the metaphor--much political goring for the Senator. Anderson's arguments and those of co-author, Douglas Sillers, an I-R from Moorhead, fell largely on deaf ears. Whatever the merits of their contentions from an efficiency, equity, or effectiveness perspective, they carried little weight in the emotional furor that ensued over the reorganization bill--Senate File 156.

School district reorganization had long been an abrasive issue in Minnesota politics, partly because reorganization was widely seen as the forerunner of "consolidation." And, as Alnes observes:

> School 'consolidation' is a dirty word to many people because it threatens them with the loss of the familiar school closest to them. In many communities, the high school, particularly, is a center of social and cultural activity and its athletic teams or band or chorus a key source of community pride and identity.[47]

Senator Anderson anticipated some of the opposition he received, though its extent and often venomous nature must have surprised him. To allay fears, he emphasized the "administrative reorganization" intent of the bill; that his measure would not close a single school. He also had excluded the largest urban districts from reorganization in an effort to gain support from their legislators. (The urban exclusion, however, angered outstate lawmakers.)[48] Despite these efforts, the reaction to the bill was immediate, vocal, and overwhelmingly negative, if press accounts are to be believed.[49] As one reporter later recounted, with some hyperbole:

> It was an ugly situation. People, especially those from communities outside of the metro area, virtually stormed the legislature with their brooms and umbrellas. Consolidation was a dirty enough word, but when it got combined with two other words--"state" and "forced"--well, those were fighting words, cause for uprising by the masses who felt that (1) schools in their communities are the last vestige of local control they have, and the state wasn't going to take that away without a fight; and that (2) consolidation was OK for somebody else, but not for them.
>
> The legislation didn't pass, but there still are legislators walking around shell shocked by what happened.[50]

Within the legislature there undoubtedly were many lawmakers who agreed privately with the argument that Minnesota had too many school districts for efficient, equitable, or effective operations, and who were sympathetic toward the concept of reorganization. But such private expressions did not translate into political visibility on the issue. Even in the Senate Education Committee there was opposition. The chair of the Committee, Jerome Hughes, publicly voiced the "reservations" he had about the specifics of the Anderson proposals. Hughes did, though, remain open to the idea of cutting the number of Minnesota districts. In fact, he told a reporter that the legislature might want to consider setting a lower limit on high school enrollments. He estimated that a limit of 500 pupils would reduce Minnesota school districts by more than half to some 200. Hughes said that he had personally not authored such a bill because he "wanted to make sure people didn't get uptight" about the ECSUs, the approach to regional services he had advocated (and which had become law) in the previous session. But once the ECSUs were established, the legislature, in Hughes view, might want to use them as the vehicle for all joint planning.[51]

If the reorganization bill failed to arouse much enthusiasm in the Senate, it met with a far more frosty reception in the House. Its leadership quickly went on record with their objections. Majority Leader Irvin Anderson from International Falls said his constituents were "very adamantly opposed to it," adding that in rural areas, "It's very difficult to see where there would be any savings."[52] School Aid Division Chairman Willis Eken said, flatly, "I'm not ready to accept it as an approach."[53] Most telling was the position of Carl Johnson, Chairman of the Education Committee, and prime mover of the PER legislation:

> I'm not going to be an author and I'm not in support of it. The bill will not effect any efficiencies in operating school systems. As I read public sentiment, they don't care to give up local boards for county boards. They see it as moving government further from home.[54]

Objections were mild in the legislature, even from House leaders, compared to those from outstate districts. School superintendents and board members inundated legislators, particuarly the beleaguered Anderson, with complaints about the "school merger bill." Some of the uproar clearly was orchestrated by the MSBA. The Association endorsed "voluntary" reorganization only, and it worked tirelessly to inform and activate its constituents on the issue.[55]

Few educators took public stands in defense of the bill. Positive mail and calls--what there was of it--came "from noneducators, and the man on the street," according to Anderson.[56] The executive director of MASA did, amidst the "smoke and fire," urge consideration of "alternative solutions," solutions which rested on the premise that some large-scale reorganization of Minnesota school districts was likely in the 1980s. Among his proposals, tested within MASA and with other interested parties, was one calling for state government to mandate a planning process among school districts so that they, working cooperatively within counties, could formulate their own "plan for reorganization and/or cooperation."[57]

As for the Department of Education, its public position well reflected the tension many state officials felt between what they felt was organizationally desirable and what was politically feasible. Joseph Graba, Deputy Commissioner, said in an early hearing on the reorganization bill that:

> It is impossible...to continue to operate the same number of school districts given the existing and projected decline in our enrollment in our state...The figures tell us that substantial reorganization is going to occur.[58]

Despite such sentiments, Graba and the Department did not line up behind Anderson's approach. Graba was reported to have commented, after the hearing, that instructions from the State Board of Education were to "sort of maintain the posture of supporting some sort of school district reorganization but somewhat short of what Senator Anderson is suggesting."[59]

The immediate outcome of the controversy was that the reorganization bill, and a substitute bill, never got out of committee in the Senate and did not even receive a hearing in the House. At first glance, Jerald Anderson's quest, and that of supporters like Doug Sillers, appears to have been a failure; a quixotic attempt to challenge, without the press of a crisis, vested district interests and constituency-oriented lawmakers. But that is too narrow a reading. The controversy had helped convince some leaders, House as well as Senate, that state leadership was again needed in this sensitive area. Reorganization proponents had created an agenda item for the conference committee on school aids and the belief among its key participants that some compromise had to be found between doing nothing about the school district situation and mandating its reorganization.

Both Anderson and Sillers served on the conference committee. This committee--working with an official from the Department of Education, assisted by a planning resource person from the University of Minnesota--decided as a compromise solution to include mandatory planning for school districts as an amendment to the Omnibus School Aids Bill of 1977. The planning precedent had been set by the ECSU and PER legislation. And during the '77 session's reorganization controversy, there had been several participants who had suggested that the issue could be dealt with through joint planning by the districts themselves, if the state used the ECSUs or established a new framework. With respect to the latter, there also had been a report, published early in the session, from the Advisory Council on Fluctuating School Enrollments.

Created by the legislature in 1974, the Council consisted of lay citizen and professional educator members appointed by the Governor. It was charged with examining "the impact of fluctuating school enrollments and their consequential effect on the quality and cost of education." Preliminary findings and recommendations were presented early in 1976; with the final report presented in February of the next year.[60] During its thirty-month existence, the Council held monthly open meetings, and public hearings were conducted in regional locations throughout the state. These activities, along with the widely disseminated final reports, probably did help to bring home to Minnesotans the seriousness of school enrollment declines. At any rate, among the Council's specific recommendations was one for the establishment of Regional School Organization Study Commissions.

The boundaries of these commissions were to coincide with the governor's developmental regions (13 in all). Their purpose was to study the condition of school districts and to recommend to the '79 legislature the actions necessary to "ensure efficient and effective administrative units."[61]

The regional study commission idea, along with a proposal to set maximum and minimum enrollment criteria for attendance areas and school districts, were considered in initial drafts of the planning amendment. But these were abandoned (even the word "region" was eliminated) as emphasis was placed on grassroots planning by local districts and by area-wide Educational Planning Task Forces (EPTFs) representing these districts. The curriculum planning requirement of PER were broadened to embrace fiscal and organizational planning. And the ECSUs were to act as conveners of the task forces, as their fiscal agents, and as a source of technical assistance.

In developing the comprehensive planning legislation, the conference committee had moved the thorny issue of school district reorganization from state to local decision arenas, at least for a few years. As one reporter interpreted it:

> What that did was pass the ball to the people in the state--mandating that they study their school districts, that they determine the feasibility of consolidation, coordination and cooperation with nearby districts, and that they come up with some answers for the Legislature in the form of comprehensive plans...[62]

Will Minnesota school districts seize the opportunities found in the planning legislation? Certainly, an organizational perspective makes one skeptical. The planning legislation calls for activities that depart from established tradition, require cooperation across district lines, consume increasingly scarce resources, and threaten in some instances the very survival of the organization. On the other hand, the law was drafted to encourage implementation and some modest funding was appropriated.[63] By 1979, ECSUs were set up throughout the state; they provided planning assistance when requested by school districts or area task forces. In this connection, there also was the Department of Education. Revitalized by new administrator appointments and internal reorganization, the Department had since the mid-1970s become increasingly effective in gathering data, supplying policy information and advice, and assisting districts with implementation problems. More important, perhaps, than the above was the belief that unless local districts took planning seriously and developed workable plans, the legislature was likely to do it for them. This belief, and the credibility the legislature gave to it, added impetus to the process. So, in a more positive vein, did the prospect that local educators in working through the planning requirements would see benefits in cooperative activities.

By the close of the decade, the comprehensive planning process was complete (PER was to continue on an annual basis). The plans were filed with the Department of Education; then relayed to the House and Senate Education Committees. Initial reactions were laudatory about the process, hopeful about the plans. Commissioner Casmey was particularly enthusiastic:

> It is an experiment in education that's being watched by every other state to see if getting people involved in education this way can make a difference. I can tell you, it is making a difference. For the first time, we really know what people want from the schools; we, in education and in the legislature, know for the first time what the public expects, what it would like us to do.[64]

And what did "the public" expect? While there were countless suggestions contained in the planning reports, the overwhelming preference was for voluntary action and district initiative. Whether this preference for local control can meet the problems that give rise to reorganization proposals is an issue that state government will undoubtedly have to confront again in the 1980s.

Concluding Observations

What can be said about the process through which Minnesota state government responded to the planning issue inherent in declining school enrollments? Although our data do not permit detailed analyses, they do suggest three general observations.

The first is that it did not require a crisis for state government to respond to changed conditions. True, Minnesota state government was reactive, not anticipatory, in its policy response. Early warnings of severe enrollment declines went largely unheeded. Still, the planning legislation was enacted well in advance of any crisis situation in local school districts. This responsiveness seems partly to be explained by characteristics of state governmental institutions. As identified by scholars (see Chapter 1), these characteristics in Minnesota include an orientation toward issues, an openness to constituents, a competitive party system, and an adherence to norms emphasizing Minnesota as a pace-setter among the states.

In addition to this institutional responsiveness, there existed in Minnesota several specific organizational mechanisms for drawing attention to emerging issues. One of these was the State Planning Agency. Created in 1967 as a staff agency to the governor's office, the Planning Agency developed the capacity to identify demographic, fiscal, and educational trends--and their implications for state government. In the early 1970s, this Agency through its Human Resources Planning Unit and Office of the State Demographer began to raise hard questions about how well the total "system" for delivering human services was coping with the pressures of demographic change. When this questioning produced few data-based answers, the Planning Agency undertook a series of actions to enhance system responsiveness to the need for new educational policy and planning directions. These actions included a variety of studies and analyses on such topics as enrollment projections, birth rates and migration patterns, school finance policy, regional service agencies, and educational manpower supply and demand. The Human Resources Planning Unit also published a set of planning assistance manuals for managing school districts with declining enrollments, and was actively involved in a staff and support role in the evolution of the school district planning legislation.[65]

The second agenda-setting mechanism was a private organization, the Citizens League. Two League reports gave direct impetus to the political evolution of state requirements for school district planning. One, coming in 1974, focused on enrollment declines in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. This report contained in its recommendations a proposal for a metropolitan Education Institute to undertake planning and reporting functions for school districts. The report, particularly the institute recommendation, accelerated discussion of regional planning and service delivery among board members, superintendents, and lawmakers. A second League report, in 1972, dealt with "accountability in schools." It made a useful contribution to the background discussion and even to the specifics of the PER legislation. Indeed, it appears that the legislative leaders, staff persons, and agency officials who formulated this law relied heavily on the League report for both ideas and language.

A second conclusion is that state officials provided policy leadership through the initiation of legislative responses. Leadership is imperative whatever the institutional capability of a government. This leadership in Minnesota was primarily supplied by state legislators, working with staff and experts in the State Planning Agency and the Department of Education. Although school district planning had emerged as something of a public issue during the furor in the 1977 session over the reorganization bills, there was no widespread demand for the kind of policy action eventually taken by the legislature. As for interest group pressure, there was substantial activity led by the School Boards Association against mandated reorganization and, to a lesser extent, by the powerful teacher lobbies against accountability proposals. Yet, in the end, all these demands and pressures were filtered through the perceptions, preferences, and priorities of legislative leaders. All else became secondary to their sense of state needs. The press for change in school district planning came primarily from them; not from educators nor other external actors.

Policy direction on the planning issue came from a small number of leaders. It is hard to identify a half-dozen legislators (and their staffs and allies in the executive branch) who played an active role in the PER legislation and that requiring comprehensive planning. Both of these decisions, it should be repeated, were made by conference committees; then were included as amendments to omnibus bills. Neither planning measure had passed both house of the legislature; in fact, the comprehensive planning sections were not introduced until conference committee sessions. There had been legislative debate in Senate committees over the bills to reorganize Minnesota school districts. And comprehensive planning was seen by conference committee participants as a compromise between mandating reorganization or doing nothing to promote interdistrict cooperation. Nevertheless, the omnibus approach meant that none of the planning provisions was supported or opposed on its own merits; all passed on the broad support generated in the legislature for the omnibus bills.

A final concluding observation is that political bargaining, not rational design, was the central dynamic of the policymaking process. While the Minnesota legislature prescribed rational planning for local school districts, no such approach was reflected in legislative decision-making. Instead, the process essentially was one of political bargaining in which compromise agreements were "negotiated out" among key participants.

Decisions were legitimated but not usually made in formal settings; much bargaining occurred behind the scenes. Emphasis was put on building coalitions of the "right" persons, with legislators and their staffs serving as the principal entrepreneurs of these coalitions. None of this is surprising. It is all but inevitable in a polity where influence is shared, values are in conflict, time is scarce, information is costly, and majorities are necessary for enactment. Even so, it rankled school persons that they had to engage in a planning process which the legislature seemed unwilling to apply to its own policymaking.

From the viewpoint of centralized planning, the way that Minnesota state government responded to declining school enrollments appears to be piecemeal, uncoordinated, and without priorities. Surely, it did not reflect any "grand design." Policy analysis counted, but in a milieu of predetermined values and political bargaining. Still, the system was conducive to pushing forward on many fronts, tied together by linkage and feedback mechanisms. As of the late 1970s, the policy structure was unfinished and incomplete. Yet it also was dynamic and synergistic, with its diverse parts fitting together remarkably well. State actions to address immediate financial, program, and personnel problems were combined with actions to expand analytic capabilities at local, regional, and state levels, and to create an integrated data base for future planning. More important, perhaps, the legislation held forth the promise of stronger school districts in Minnesota, districts more capable of exerting planning leverage on enrollment declines and of generating community participation and support.

CASE III: THE K-3 PROPOSAL

by Dean Erickson

The 1979 Minnesota legislature approved a two billion dollar school aid package, the largest spending bill in the state's history. Decisions regarding such large amounts of money naturally involved conflict, compromise, and political maneuvering by legislators. Because school funding is a major part of the state's budget, it can be an intensely political activity. The purpose of this case study is to look at the political dimensions of school policymaking by following a specific piece of legislation from its conception through its legislative journey to its eventual defeat. The legislation to be used for the analysis is the Primary Grade Instructional Improvement Program, popularly known as the "K-3" proposal, introduced and championed by Minnesota Governor Albert Quie.

Goals of the K-3 Proposal

On January 4, 1979, Governor Quie presented his first inaugural address to the legislature. In his remarks concerning education he said:

> By the last week in May, I hope we will have made great strides in improving the quality of education. Education is worthy of its name when the individual is enhanced. Therefore, the impact of my educational proposals, hopefully, will recognize each child's uniqueness by increasing individualized instruction, expanding local decision making and encouraging parental involvement.[1]

The method through which the Governor hoped to realize these educational advances was the Primary Grade Instructional Improvement Program for grades K-3. This proposal was designed to give Minnesota schools the shot in the arm they needed to counter the negative feelings caused by enrollment declines and teacher cutbacks. Quie was attempting to increase school funding even though the numbers of K-12 students were decreasing, accomplishing this feat while still promising to lower taxes. An ambitious task, indeed, especially for a first-term governor in a minority party. The K-3 proposal on which the Governor based his hopes was designed around four main goals:

1. To improve the quality of instruction in the primary grades by providing additional resources to school districts to reduce class size in grades kindergarten through third.

2. To provide in-service training for primary grade teachers and administrators.

3. To establish closer relations between the school and the home.

4. To provide for additional instructional materials designed to meet the program objectives.

There were other "goals" of Quie's proposal besides those officially set forth in the legislation. According to Quie, in his presentation on April 6th before the School Aids Division of the House Education Committee, the K-3 proposal could restore a significant measure of excitement to education:

> I believe we are in danger of losing the sense of excitement which education must provide if its high value to individuals and to society is to be retained. This sense of excitement is vital if the energy and dynamism which have propelled our society to the highest level of education attainment in history are to be continually nourished.[2]

This idea was reiterated by a member of Governor Quie's staff: "Declining enrollment was creating a real negative feeling among educators. The Governor was trying to replace that negative attitude with something positive."[3] "The Governor was also," in the opinion of the staff member, "trying to get legislators to look at the whole issue of educational quality ...Too often legislators are concerned only with getting the job done. The K-3 proposal got some of them to think beyond that to questions of quality."[4] Quie also claimed that the proposal could have "long range economic and social benefits to society as a whole."[5] In his presentation to the House Schools Aids Division, the Governor argued that his K-3 legislation could be an important step in the reduction of deviant behavior in adults:

> We now can link social deviant behavior of adults to failure to achieve in basic ways in early schooling. The policy implications for this linkage are staggering. The price for failure to invest adequately at the pressure point at which positive benefits have a reasonable chance of being achieved is the waste of human potential, and perhaps even life--as well as the high costs of remedial services and even criminal activity. Those are indeed high social stakes which I believe we can reduce by shifting our thinking from the treatment of social problems after they have arisen to their prevention initially.[6]

The cost of Governor Quie's K-3 proposal for the biennium was to be approximately $70 million. The 1979-80 school year would have involved a minimum of 25 school districts as demonstration sites. The second year would have involved statewide application for those districts choosing to participate.

Pressures for Reform

One of the most important constraints on Quie's legislative thrust was the lack of any overwhelming public pressure for change. True, declining enrollment districts were struggling with teacher layoffs and program curtailments; transportation costs were soaring, especially in districts with many miles and few students; educational quality was being called into question; and a return to the "basics" was becoming a battle cry. Yet there apparently was no strong feeling among legislators or their constituents that K-3 class size reduction was an answer to these problems. Why, then, did the K-3 proposal emerge in 1979?

To answer this question, one must look first at the political climate surrounding the governor and the legislature in 1979. Governor Quie had been a recognized educational leader in his tenure as a Congressman. It was expected by many onlookers that he would use his political expertise to effect changes in statewide education, thereby making his mark in Minnesota politics. Whether educational reform was needed or not, Governor Quie needed it for a successful political start.

DFLers in Minnesota took obvious pride in their role as educational leaders in a state known for its progressive approach to education. The new I-R Governor had to deal with this tradition in his attempt to become the educational leader of the state. He, therefore, had to outplay the DFLers in the game of educational spending, a game in which they had become the undisputed champions. To outspend the educational big spenders, to outlead the traditional educational leaders; these pressures probably were important factors behind the K-3 proposal. Add to this an expected state budget surplus of some $250 million, and the scramble was on to spend that money in the most politically beneficial manner.

Yet Quie had reasons, other than political, for pushing the K-3 proposal. Most focused on improving the quality of education in Minnesota. He used research to justify increased expenditures to lower class size. He contended that declining enrollment and the ensuing job insecurities were causing negative feelings in the teaching profession, feelings that were having a detrimental effect on teacher performance. An aide to the Governor expressed this point by saying: "There are real negative feelings being expressed in teacher's lounges across this state. K-3 was designed to improve this attitude by improving the conditions teachers teach in."[7] Thus, the pressures for change surrounding the K-3 issue included ones for making a good educational climate better. The debate was not over whether or not to spend dollars on education, but rather where the money would be most beneficial.

To sum up, the K-3 proposal was not a response to a popular mandate for change. It was instead a proposal created out of some mix of political necessity and genuine concerns. Minnesota state political realities of 1979 and Quie's desire for educational improvement were probably the main reasons for the K-3 proposal.

Initiating the K-3 Legislation

Promises and pledges had been made throughout Quie's campaign concerning the importance of class size reduction. Shortly after his election, these promises had to be dealt with. As recalled by one of the key aides of the Governor:

> After his election, the Governor went to the State Department of Education and the State Planning Agency to get advice on implementation procedures and supportive rationale for a K-3 class size reduction plan. He felt that it was necessary to focus on K-3, rather than attempting to reduce class size K-12, because research showed that in order to have any effect at all on student learning the reduction had to be significant, not just one or two students less per class. By dealing with just K-3 that kind of major class size reduction could take place.[8]

The main contributors to Quie's proposal were individuals from the State Planning Agency, the University of Minnesota, and the Department of Education. The three individuals involved each had expertise in the areas of school finance and the politics of education policy formation in Minnesota. According to one Quie aide, this group was given the charge of developing a proposal which would include the expenditure of "somewhere in the area of $50 - 100 million, and would incorporate the Governor's philosophical beliefs about K-3 class size reduction into a politically sellable package."[9]

Governor Quie's "go slow style," criticized by some legislators in both parties,[10] was evident in the initiation of the K-3 proposal. Although quick in his introduction and initial formulation of the proposal, the actual K-3 bill did not roll off the legislative presses until mid-March. Why there was such a long delay was never specifically answered by members of the Governor's staff. They simply said that Quie's entire transition into the governor's office was well behind schedule. The Governor finally laid out his proposal to the legislature in a "Special Message on Education" on March 15, 1979. The Primary Grade Instructional Improvement Program, (K-3), Senate File 938, House File 930, was introduced as legislation on March 19, 1979.

Legislative Response

The legislative makeup for the 1979 session favored the DFL. The House was evenly split 67-67; the Senate had a 47-20 DFL majority. The House School Aids Division was split evenly 6-6; the Senate Subcommittee on Education Aids was DFL dominated. The leadership roles of these two subcommittees, where the school aids bill was actually shaped, were assumed by two powerful and able DFL legislators. Gene Merriam was the Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee and Willis Eken was his counterpart in the House. For a new I-R Governor to steer his legislation through this quagmire of DFL strength was a formidable task. To do so would have taken the help of some DFL members as well as the unified support of all I-R members. Even so, successes by minority party governors in getting their school finance proposals passed by a legislature dominated by the opposition party had occurred in Minnesota political history. In 1971, for example, DFL Governor Wendell Anderson passed a major piece of educational reform legislation tied to a tax bill in spite of the DFL's minority status in the legislature. (Anderson, it might be noted, did need the use of a veto and a special session to get the task accomplished.) Historically, educational legislation had not been a partisan issue in Minnesota politics. Given this fact, Quie's task, though difficult, was not impossible.

At first glance, the support behind the K-3 proposal looked impressive. The Minnesota Education Association (MEA), with its 45,000 members and its reputation as being among the largest contributors to Minnesota's political campaigns, was the primary lobbying force behind the legislation. The MEA had a tradition in the 1970s of lining up with the DFL on most issues; their support of the Governor's K-3 bill broke with this tradition. The success of the K-3 bill would insure the continuation of many elementary school teaching jobs, likely to be lost to declining enrollment. As one Senator stated, "Of course that's what it (MEA support) is all about." A Minneapolis school board member commented that the first time he heard class reduction talk was when teachers began to lose jobs. But Don Hill, President of MEA, argued that the K-3 proposal was more than just a move to save jobs. He maintained that "there are more studies favoring small classes over large classes. Plenty of classes in Minnesota are too big to allow for sound instruction."[11] Hill added: "I'd like to see a lawsuit from a parent. I think we [teachers] should stand at the door and say that's it. Fifteen kids. We are not going to take any more. We need another class, another teacher."[12] For educational quality, as well as job preservation, the MEA had become a vocal advocate of the K-3 proposal. The Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) and the Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA) also came out strongly in favor of the K-3 plan.

The opponents of K-3 lined up behind the DFL school finance plan. The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) opposed the K-3 plan, partly because of fiscal considerations. Willard Baker, Associate Executive Secretary of MSBA, stated: "We aren't sure this [class size reduction] is our highest priority for how we use our money. There may be other education needs with a higher priority, like broadening the curriculum. Besides, the research is contradictory."[13] MSBA also expressed concerns about the impact of K-3 "targeting" on the decision-making discretion of local school boards.

Metropolitan districts with declining enrollment and their lobbying organization, the Association of Metropolitan School Districts (AMSD), opposed the proposal, again because of fiscal considerations. These districts, generally, had smaller enrollments in the lower grades, giving them less foundation aids if moneys were distributed disproportionally to K-3 students. The big city districts and many suburban districts stood to lose substantial sums of state aid if the $70 million were distributed through K-3 instead of through a K-12 formula. These school districts, most being geographically close to the State Capitol--which enhanced their lobbying potential--created a formidable opposition to the K-3 proposal.

The Minnesota Federation of Teachers also backed the DFL plan, stating that they liked local discretion in determining how the money should be spent and that class size reduction should be a part of local collective bargaining. This position also offered the MFT a chance to oppose the MEA's stand, something the smaller MFT organization relished and used to its fullest advantage.

The DFL school finance plan was unveiled on March 28, 1979. This plan attempted to capitalize on the political weaknesses of the Governor's proposal. Specifically, it increased the formula allowance to $1182 per pupil unit in 1979-80 ($10 more than the Governor's plan) and $1265 in 1980-81 ($11 more than the Governor's plan). The DFL proposal would have also cut the basic school levy to 24 mills in 1980-81 (2 mills below the Governor's plan). A four-year averaging clause for declining enrollment districts and an equalized discretionary levy were also included in the DFL proposal. The total DFL package was estimated to cost approximately $1.4 million less than the Governor's proposal. A Pioneer Press headline captured the political appeal of the DFL plan: "DFL Plan Raises School Aid, Cuts Property Tax." Although the headline was speaking specifically about the St. Paul School District, it was applicable to most districts across the state.

The political lines had been drawn. The two plans were on the table for examination. It was now Governor Quie's political task to build enough support for his plan to overcome the DFL's numerical advantage. The process of building coalitions, according to Bailey, is basically what politics is all about:

> Politics is the fashioning of coalitions of influence in an attempt to determine what values will be authoritatively implemented by government. Decisions concerning state education are the products of political conflict and resolution: education as a major expenditure in every state budget is, therefore, one of the most thoroughly political enterprises in American life.[14]

According to Kirst, in an article dealing with coalition building: "The essential quality of a state educational leader is the ability to build political coalitions."[15] Any decision is possible if one is adept enough at garnering support for a position from among various groups involved in the process. To gain this support, trade-offs are undertaken. In essence, coalition building involves "horse trading until an acceptable policy is hammered out."[16] An important tool used in this process of "horse trading" is a side payment. "Side payments" include anything that has value for possible coalition members, including money or promises on policy. A leader is one who offers side payments; a follower is one who receives these payments. Riker identifies four primary side payments used in educational coalition building.[17] These side payments provide a basis to analyze Quie's attempt to build a winning coalition for the K-3 proposal.

Threat of Reprisal

This side payment refers to a promise of a certain act if wishes are not adhered to or the withholding of that act if the desired action is obtained.

Quie's only threat of reprisal was a hint that a veto would await the school aids bill if it arrived on his desk minus the K-3 funding. This hint came primarily from staff members and legislators rather than from the Governor himself. The Governor used more general statements, such as "I'm going to be pushing this thing as hard as I can."[18] Such remarks left open the possibility of a veto without actually a commitment to its use. One of the Governor's top advisors stated publicly, in an April 20th interview, "The governor's office is examining the feasibility of using a line item veto if the school spending bill comes to Quie's desk without his primary instruction plan."[19]

Hints of a veto do not create a viable threat. In the judgment of a local journalist who covered the K-3 proposal's political progress extensively: "Quie hinted at a veto when he should have been offering to compromise, and then offered to compromise when a veto forcing a special session could have carried the day."[20] Most legislators interviewed for this case study never felt that a veto was imminent. Although Quie said the K-3 bill was important to him, these legislators did not believe that it was of enough importance for him to use the veto. Still, the House deadlock would have made the veto a powerful reprisal threat.

The reason why Quie did not use the threat of a veto as a "side payment" in building his coalition is difficult to ascertain. The official answer was that a "veto of the school aid bill would cause much concern among students, teachers, administrators, and parents. I do not want to disrupt the educational system needlessly."[21] Whatever the motive it must be noted that Quie's actions did not measure up to the verbal importance he placed on the K-3 proposal. Perhaps, Quie was too new in Minnesota state politics to know what reprisals to use in his coalition building. In any event, DFL legislators did not appear to fear any specific reprisals from the Governor when they voted on the K-3 proposal.

Payments of Objects that Can be Converted to Money

This side payment refers to job appointments, political support, campaign finances, and other forms of political gifts which can be doled out in payment for joining a leader's coalition.

According to an advisor to the Governor: "Maybe we [the Governor and staff] should have waited for two years before we tried something of this magnitude [K-3]. Not enough of us knew the ropes, not enough of us knew how things really work around here."[22] Lack of experience in state government, perhaps, did account for deficiencies in the use of this side payment. Although such side payments are usually not well publicized, there is no evidence of Quie using any political clout to expand his K-3 coalition.

One supportive organization that could have used its campaign coffers for side payments was the MEA. The MEA contributed heavily to DFL legislative campaigns. Continued financial support could have been promised in return for DFL support for the K-3 proposal. This may have occurred to a small degree; however, any persuading that the MEA did with DFL legislators proved to be ultimately unsuccessful. Indeed, it is questionable how much support beyond lip service the MEA gave to the bill. A Minneapolis Tribune headline spoke to the issue of the MEA's relationship to this legislation: "Education Lobbyists Will Win Either Way in School Aid Fight." Both the DFL plan and the K-3 plan would have benefited education. For educators, in the words of Connie Levi, an I-R Representative, it was "a case of good, better, best."[23] The similarity in dollar amounts between the two plans, and the MEA's ties with the DFL may well have dampened MEA's enthusiasm for energetically supporting the K-3 legislation.

Certainly, MEA's activity in support of the K-3 plan did not represent a full commitment by the organization. MEA President, Don Hill, in a last ditch effort to gain support, did write a letter to DFL legislators in mid-May attempting to encourage K-3 thinking. He reminded them that many DFL legislators were helped financially by the MEA; that their lack of support for K-3 could be an issue when it came time to determine campaign funding for the following year. But this threat of a side payment was probably too little and too late to have much effect. Senate Majority Leader, Nick Coleman, did begin talking the MEA line near the end of the session, and suggested that some reference to K-3 should be included in the school aid bill. Whether this was a response to MEA's pleas or just an attempt to placate the Governor is unknown. What is known is that it produced no discernable support for the K-3 proposal among DFLers.

Promises on Policy

This side payment refers to the art of compromise. A leader would accept an amendment to a proposal in return for joining that leader's coalition.

Governor Quie, through much of his K-3 campaign, projected the attitude that compromise was not possible. Lieutenant Governor Lou Wangberg described this attitude by saying, "I don't see him being very willing to compromise, it [the K-3 proposal] grows out of his toenails."[24] Despite rhetoric to the contrary, it soon became apparent that without any concessions K-3 was doomed. Realizing this political fact, Quie agreed to his only compromise of the entire K-3 campaign. In an obvious move to gain the support of school districts with declining enrollments, Quie accepted the four-year averaging portion of the DFL proposal. This change gave declining enrollment districts an extra $25 million by allowing them to average their enrollment over a four year period rather than the former 3.25 year period. This compromise allowed several key I-R legislators on the House School Aids Division to support the K-3 proposal. Without the four-year averaging proposal, the districts of these legislators would not have faired well under the K-3 plan. Quie's concessions, therefore, solidified wavering I-R support. Because of the 6-6 split on the House School Aids Division, it was crucial that Quie retain solid I-R support before he attempted to expand his coalition to embrace DFLers.

Other than the four-year averaging compromise, Quie seemed determined not to make changes in his program. The deeper entrenched Quie became, the less feasible became compromise. Gene Mammenga, lobbyist for the MEA, stated publicly that compromise seemed unlikely: "He wants it (K-3) intact."[25] But Rod Searle, I-R House Speaker, talking about the lack of compromise, argued: "I'm surprised that the DFL have made it so political, they have not conceded one inch on it."[26] In short, neither side seemed willing to amend their positions to expand their coalitions. An exception to this occurred in an April 18th compromise attempt by Senator Jerome Hughes. Hughes, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, was an advocate of pre-school education and was philosophically sympathetic with attempts at improving early grade education. His $22 million compromise proposal might have been passed with strong I-R support. But Quie still clung to his non-compromise approach, and it was defeated. The problem with this approach for Quie was that his coalition was not large enough to carry the bill. Unless he could expand his coalition, the K-3 plan was certain to be defeated.

Payments of Emotional Satisfaction

This side payment is used by charismatic leaders who make followers feel good simply because they are on the leader's side. When all other side payments fail to expand a coalition, a leader can rely on charisma to win opponents over and expand the coalition. These leaders make one want to be on their side; to be a member of their "team" even if this means voting against a party position.

What kind of charismatic leader was Al Quie in the 1979 legislative session? His supporters characterized him as a thoughtful, careful, and deliberate man who looked at all sides before he made decisions. In his campaign Quie said on several occasions that his forte was his ability to bring diverse forces together. Was this a sufficient skill to expand his K-3 coalition?

Al Quie felt his gubernatorial predecessor, Rudy Perpich, was overly concerned about style in the governor's office. Quie certainly could not be criticized for having an over abundance of personal style. One I-R legislator, speaking of the new Governor's transition into the governorship, commented, "Quie has been as dull as repeated lefse."[27] Quie described himself as a behind-the-scenes leader: "I don't see being out in front as the most sensible way to resolve problems."[28] Several I-R members seemed confused by his leadership style as exhibited in the '79 session. As one I-R legislator remarked, "He's a passive governor. He is letting people come to him. I'm surprised the DFL haven't taken him apart."[29] Nick Coleman, Senate Majority Leader, summed up DFL feelings about Quie's leadership style:

> He is not a strong leader. He is pleasant, unruffled person. But he's not the kind of governor I am used to, who believed in his point of view passionately and argued for it. He appears to lack that passion. You have the feeling he's in a ship of state that's cast off, going wherever the winds take him, and he's not trying to steer a course. 30

Quie, from all accounts, was a very likeable person. Nonetheless, the lack of passion in his backing of the K-3 issue seemed to be a handicap. Quie began the K-3 struggle as if he meant business. He declared that he was going to fight as hard as he could for the issue; but, as Coleman said, "Quie kind of laid things out and then walked away from it."[31] I-R Representative Doug Carlson interpreted Quie's lack of fight in these words: "His [Quie] problem is that he doesn't want to put the arm on anybody, he's such a decent guy."[32] Another I-R legislator complained that "you don't want to go out and put your head on the chopping block for something when the guy [Quie] who will get all the credit for it isn't willing to back you up."[33]

It seemed, therefore, that Quie's style of leadership was not an asset in expanding his K-3 coalition. The feeling received from legislator respondents was that few, if any, votes were gained because of loyalty to a charismatic governor. On the contrary, support seemed to be lost because Quie was seen as not willing to fight for what he believed. He was unable to instill a feeling of comradery among the legislators, nor to create sufficient support for the "governor's" K-3 coalition because "supporting the governor is a positive thing in itself."

In the end, Governor Quie failed to expand his coalition beyond party line support. One of the reasons for this failure was his unsuccessful use of side payments to garner support. One observer noted that "he could have done that well if they would have voted on the K-3 proposal the day it was introduced." Why a governor who had developed political expertise from twenty years in Washington did not fare better on such a high priority piece of state legislation is a puzzle. After looking at the final resolution of the K-3 issue, the case study will conclude with observations about why his failure occurred.

Final Resolution of the K-3 Issue

Despite attempts by Governor Quie to expand his coalition beyond the I-R legislators, the K-3 proposal failed time and again on straight party votes. The House School Aids Subcommittee passed the DFL school aid package on April 27. The major K-3 amendments were defeated 6-6. The DFLers on the House School Aids Subcommittee blocked four versions of the Quie plan. Yet the I-R legislators allowed the DFL plan to leave the subcommittee. Sally Olsen, I-R Representative, said the reason the I-R did not attempt to hold the DFL bill hostage was a matter of principle. The I-R caucus, according to Olsen, had a goal that they would not stall legislation just because they could not get their way.[34] Whether this was the reason for lack of retaliation on the part of the I-R, or whether several I-R members felt countervailing pressures because the DFL bill would benefit their constituents more than Quie's plan, is unknown. It is clear, however, that the Governor and the I-R legislators did not match their rhetoric about the K-3 with action. On April 29th, the House Education Committee passed the DFL school aid package. Again, the K-3 amendment was defeated on a party vote. The bill was passed by the House Appropriations Committee;then it was presented to the House floor where it was passed unanimously. A K-3 amendment was introduced on the floor of the House and was defeated on another party vote.

The K-3 bill had much the same experience in the Senate. On April 18th, the Senate Subcommittee passed the DFL school aid bill. The subcommittee delayed decision on the K-3 proposal until the school aid bill was heard by the full Senate Education Committee. Senator Hughes, Chairman of the Education Committee, offered a $22 million compromise amendment, a watered-down version of the K-3 proposal. This amendment made it into a bill for a brief time, but was slashed to $2 million after

Senator Gene Merriam, Chairman of the subcommittee which wrote the bill, said the $22 million amendment was too expensive. According to a Governor's aide in reference to this amendment: "The Governor wants enough to make a difference, not tokenism."[35] It was felt by several respondents that the Governor's support of Hughes' compromise might have made it successful. Instead, a "token" $22 million was replaced by an even more token $2 million. The DFL bill was thus passed by the Senate Education Committee, with Quie's $70 million whittled down to $2 million. This version was passed by the Senate Finance Committee and sent to the floor of the Senate.

It was prior to the full Senate vote on the school aids package that one of the strangest occurrences in the K-3 story took place. The Senate, though dominated by the DFL, held out some hope for the K-3 plan because of the unexpected support of Majority Leader Coleman. Coleman, as already noted, argued that the K-3 issue could have a negative effect on the polls for DFL legislators. He was prepared to seek his caucus' support for a $20 million floor amendment aimed at class size reduction. But Governor Quie, for unexplained reasons, all but conceded defeat at a press conference the morning before the K-3 bill came up on the Senate floor for a final vote. After declaring he would not use a veto because of the damaging effects it would have on education, Quie announced that "the K-3 proposal, we're going to get it. If we don't get it this time, we will get it next time. I am not disappointed."[36] Quie may not have been disappointed, but some I-R Senators were disappointed, confused, and irate. One Senator said, "I felt like I was up on the soap box for the guy and he came and kicked it out from under me."[37] The I-R, with any incentives for fighting now removed, joined the DFL in passing the school aids bill 62-0. Included in the Senate version was the $2 million for class size reduction and a statement supporting the concept of improving the instructional program in grades K-3.

The only hope the K-3 proposal had at this point was the slight possibility of being revived in the conference committee where the final school aids bill was written. Quie's admission of defeat insured, for all practical purposes, that the K-3 bill would not be included in any substantial form in the 1979 schools aids bill. Don Hill felt that there was still a chance to get more than token support to reduce class size. His letter was a last minute effort to rescue K-3. The hope was that the I-R conference committee members would join the DFL members of the conference committee who were sympathetic to K-3. This block of six votes could have forced the eleven member committee to add some form of K-3 funding to the bill. Governor Quie seems to have dropped out of the fight by this point and was not involved in any attempt to resurrect the K-3 proposal.

The hope for a K-3 resurrection was short lived as the conference committee became embroiled in battles over two issues: special state aids to school districts with declining enrollment, and a one mill discretionary levy. With both the Senate and House members taking no budge postures, observers began talking of the possibility of a special session. The K-3 proposal and its $2 million remnant seemed to get lost in the attempts to reach a compromise on the other issues. With Eken and Merriam as the primary negotiators in breaking the deadlock, it is safe to say that class size reduction plans received little or no attention in the shuffle to wrap things up before adjournment. Both men were leaders in the fight to defeat K-3; neither was concerned about the Governor's feelings on this issue. The final compromise, hammered out in lengthy sessions between Merriam and Eken, made no mention of Quie's K-3 plan. Even the $2 million token effort had been eliminated. Thus, on May 21st, the Omnibus School Aids Bill passed the House 132-0 and the Senate 46-19. The K-3 proposal had been defeated.

Concluding Observations

Why was the K-3 proposal defeated? There were numerous factors, besides Quie's political failure to broaden his supportive coalition, that contributed to the defeat of the proposal. The following four factors were among the most significant:

1. "Poor Political Handling "

An advisor to the Governor conceded: "We [the Governor and his staff] blew it. Poor timing, poor leadership, poor staff support... all of these led to its [K-3] defeat. The proposal really was not defeated on its educational merits, but because of poor political handling."[38] The Governor, experienced in federal education legislation, was new in working with the state legislature. One I-R legislator said that Quie:

> ...didn't seem to know when to flatter legislators and when to get tough, when to court them and when to threaten them with vetos. Quie may have been in Congress 20 years, but this is a different bunch here, one that is used to doing things in different ways.[39]

The persons on his staff in charge of the K-3 proposal also had little experience with school finance legislation.. Key legislators were either ignored or consulted too late to make a difference in their vote. Several DFL leaders said that they were never even contacted by any member of Quie's staff regarding the proposal.[40]

Key legislators not being consulted was but a symptom of a disorganization of support for the legislation. Howard Casmey, Commissioner of Education, was in favor of the K-3 proposal. Yet, when asked why he had not come out and publicly supported the issue, his reply was that "it [K-3] was Quie's proposal, not mine. Nobody has asked me that question before."[41] Late in the session, the Governor assigned a second staff person to this legislation in an attempt to organize the various support groups and to coordinate a lobbying effort. This move came entirely too late. A leading I-R legislator said, "Feeble lobbying efforts by Quie and his staff cost him the K-3 proposal."[42]

The timing of the bill was poor. While Quie had presented the bill in theory in January and had put the dollar amount in the budget, the actual bills were not introduced until mid-March. The Governor admitted that his tardiness in this matter was not helpful; in his words: "Those bills should have been there. It's not good."[43] The DFL, in effect, was given from January to March to figure out how to spend the allotted

$70 million. One close observer noted that "much of the horse trading had already been done before the K-3 bill was even introduced."[44] A coalition of influence constructed by Quie's DFL rivals had been largely built before the Governor's legislative strategy had even begun.

2. Loss of "Local Control"

Local control is an extremely sensitive issue among educators and school officials. When the state gives school districts money with strings attached, such as how it must be spent, local board members become apprehensive. They believe that their decision-making power is being usurped. Typical of this fear was an editorial in a Minneapolis paper by the chairman of a suburban school board. The editorial was critical of the K-3 proposal because of its interference in local district affairs: "It is neither necessary nor appropriate for the governor or the legislature to mandate how local communities should meet the complex challenges they face."[45]

Rumors began to circulate among legislators that some districts would be forced to construct additional buildings to facilitate the smaller but more numerous classes envisaged by the Quie proposal. A DFL legislator voiced concern by saying that eight new buildings would have to be constructed in his district to accommodate classes of 1-15 ratios.[46] The Governor attempted to alleviate these fears by speaking to the issue of local control. For example, in his April 6th testimony to the House School Aids Division, he said:

> To reinforce the emphasis on local control I do not propose to establish any mandated class size, or even to mandate the program for every district in the state. I firmly believe that school districts have the inherent ability to perceive their needs far more clearly than a remote centralized structure can. I thus propose that local boards be granted the freedom to choose to participate or to not participate, to develop evaluation mechanisms which will be most applicable to their conditions, to prescribe inservice training programs which begin with the assessment of their particular and unique staff needs. The overall objectives of the program as embodied in legislation, provide the organizing framework within which local determination can operate.[47]

This statement might have quelled some rumors about mandated class size. It did not, however, alleviate the feeling among many educators and some legislators that the state was interfering excessively in local school district's decisions.

The DFL, sensing Quie's vulnerability on the local control issue, quickly pointed out that they, too, were concerned about the K-3 plan's invasion of local control. Indeed, a leading DFL spokesman described the main difference between his caucus' proposal and Quie's proposal as a matter of local control: "The DFL plan would put roughly the same amount of money into several different programs, most of which could be spent by a local school board on needs of its choosing."[48] Although Quie spoke from the onset of his proposal that he supported local control, he evidently never convinced local school officials that the K-3 plan was not going to interfere with their governance of schools.

3. The K-3 Legislation Itself

The distributional effects of the K-3 proposal made it difficult to sell politically. Districts experiencing declining enrollment usually had many financial problems, while at the same time they also had a disproportionately small number of pupils in grades K-3. Simple financial calculations showed such districts that they stood to gain less if the $70 million were distributed through the K-3 plan than if it were distributed K-12 through the existing pupil weighting formula. Minneapolis, St. Paul and most of the first-ring suburbs, would have gained more if the K-3 proposal dollars were distributed by raising the per pupil formula amount for all K-12 students. Consequently, it was politically difficult for legislators from these areas to support the K-3 proposal.

The DFL used the time that they were given to develop an alternative plan for the expenditure of the $70 million Quie had earmarked for the K-3 program. As viewed by DFL legislative leaders, Quie's plan sacrificed too much to make it worthwhile. If $70 million was spent on K-3, grades 4-12 were consequently being neglected. In the opinion of one DFL legislator: "It [DFL plan] addresses the severe problems of our school districts rather than establishing a new program that benefits K-3 but fails to help the remainder of the academic group."[49] Another formulator of the DFL plan reinforced this idea of the K-3 being too specialized by arguing: "The main difference between our [DFL] philosophy and the Governor's is that ours gives top priority to helping school districts which are short on funds. The Governor apparently does not see that as such a severe problem and emphasizes reducing class sizes instead."[50]

There were other problems encountered because of weaknesses in the K-3 legislation itself. In Quie's attempts to ensure local control in his legislation, the K-3 bill became unstructured. As a source from the MEA commented, "We had difficulty lobbying effectively on the issue because the Governor's proposal was so fuzzy."[51] The K-3 had no mechanism to ensure that the allotted money would actually go to reduce class sizes, a fact that the MFT in particular noted in setting forth its own class size bill. Districts were to determine how to spend the money, and set up their own evaluation to show that the money was being spent effectively. There was also criticism as to how fast this plan was to be implemented. Several DFLers argued that there just was not enough lead time to set up quality use of the funds. "It appears he is still working with a concept," said one DFL leader. "It is hard to visualize his expectations."[52]

The K-3 bill seemed to be based, in part, on Quie's gut-level belief that smaller class sizes would make a difference in educational quality. But the research was limited and inconclusive. In fact, the major synthesis by Glass and Smith, on which Quie based many of his "research shows" comments, showed a slightly higher correlation between class size reduction and achievement in the secondary grades.[53] This finding, understandably, was used by K-3 opponents to justify the DFL's K-12 funding plan.

There was no strong public mandate for change pushing this legislation. On the contrary, there was the feeling expressed by some commentators that the legislation was a $70 million political move by Quie to enhance his image. A suburban school district administrator commented that if improvement of K-3 education were a high priority in his district, he and the school board could take steps to improve it without having legislation: "The most important part of education is the teacher. We know who the best elementary teachers are. All we would have to do is put them in K-3 classrooms. We do not feel, however, that the research is strong enough to warrant such a move."[54]

Another illustration of how changes in this direction could be made without a large amount of state funds was the Montevideo experiment. Largely through the use of parent volunteers, this district had lowered the adult-pupil ratio to 1-10. The elementary pupils in this district scored over a year higher on standardized math tests and a year and a half higher on reading.[55] Interestingly enough, Quie used this example in support of his K-3 proposal, saying that reduced class size made the difference. Opponents pointed to Montevideo as an example of what a district could accomplish without state funding if they set K-3 class size reduction as a local priority. (Montevideo did receive $162,000 in federal funds for 200 students from low income families as a follow up to the local head-start program.)

The DFL built a wider base of support among educators by spreading dollars over K-12 instead of focusing on K-3. They also attempted to gain support from other publics by emphasizing the property tax reduction aspect of their package. For example, the press release of March 28, 1979, in which the DFL announced their school aid package, contained the following statement from one of the DFL authors: "In addition, our estimate of local costs indicates that school districts across the state would levy $30 million less in property taxes than under the Governor's proposal."

Governor Quie felt that the public was concerned about class size reduction and would rally behind his proposal. Apparently, the public was not as concerned about lowering class size as he had hoped, especially when compared to the prospect of reducing property taxes. A February 4th Minneapolis Tribune poll showed that 52 percent of the public surveyed felt reducing class size would improve education a great deal, and 60 percent felt that adding more teachers was worth the cost. Perhaps polls like this one misled the Governor into thinking that his issue was more popular than it was. Only 40 percent of the households in Minnesota had children in K-12 public schools. And, as this number continued to decrease, it became more difficult to make educational legislation a popular public issue. As Senator Roger Moe, DFL Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee stated: "The greatest pressure seems to be for state aid to reduce local school property tax, not class ratios. In my districts, we have declining enrollment and the ratios aren't too bad--I'd guess 1:22 or somewhere in the low 20's."[56]

The DFL plan, in short, managed to encompass a broad coalition of support because of its emphasis on K-12 rather than K-3 education, and by stressing property tax reduction rather than class size reduction. Unfortunately, the educational merits of the K-3 proposal may well have been overlooked because of these political considerations. The reality of the political system encourages legislators to focus on what will get them reelected in their districts, sometimes to the detriment of statewide policy innovation.

4. The Governor's Personal Involvement

Governor Quie came into office with unusually impressive credentials as an educational leader. Because of his background, the obvious place for him to begin to make his mark in Minnesota politics was the field of education. Next to tax cuts, the K-3 plan had top priority on Quie's legislative agenda. The Governor held his bill in such high esteem that he declared himself to be in "good shape" if he got only his promised tax cut and education bill through the 1979 legislature.[57] Its importance was dramatized by his personal testimony in front of two legislative units, something that had not been done by a Minnesota governor since 1955.

Was this personal involvement by the Governor beneficial? The K-3 plan became known as "the governor's plan." As seen by one aide, none of the legislators felt ownership of the proposal; it was the Governor's to win or lose.[58] For an experienced governor with many known allies and an abundance of political capital to use in the legislative process, personal ownership of a bill may be an advantage. But for a new governor, with few trusted allies, little knowledge of the state legislative process, and an unknown amount of political clout, strong identification with a proposal may be a disadvantage. In addition, Quie had just defeated an incumbent governor who had many friends in the legislature. The situation was ripe for defeating the K-3 plan "simply to get the new governor." Such feelings set a partisan tone that was hardly conducive to the passage of the K-3 legislation.

On the 29th of March, 1979, the Governor issued a statement responding to the DFL plan. If compromise had been on the minds of the leaders of the two camps before this statement, their task must have looked hopeless after the statement was released. For many DFL leaders, it was a declaration of political war; Quie's words were harsh:

> I will not stand by when the DFL starts striking away at the very heart of our children's education. The DFL plan presented today forces our young people to pay the price for declining enrollment. The DFL is making scapegoats of our children. For the DFL to eliminate such a program (K-3) shows not only callous disregard for our young, but shows appalling ignorance as well.[59]

The response from the DFL was predictably angry, causing DFL leaders to "dig in their heels."[60] The Governor, in drawing the battle lines, had ignored the basic political fact that some DFL support was needed for his plan to make it through the DFL-dominated Senate and an evenly divided House. To declare publicly that the DFL had "callous disregard" for the young was a political mistake. Quie confessed that his biggest surprise as governor had been that members of the legislature were so partisan.[61] Yet the Governor appeared just as partisan as any other actor in the K-3 drama.

The question that continues to surface throughout this case study concerns the role of the Governor and the negative effect he apparently had on his issue. His involvement seemed often to hinder the K-3 legislation, rather than help it. One interesting view was given on this paradox by a leading I-R legislator. "Maybe," he thought out loud, "Al Quie really did not want the K-3 legislation passed this session. Maybe he got as much, if not more, political mileage out of the issue because it was defeated."[62] Quie did come out of the K-3 fight looking like the number one education supporter, and he probably gained sympathy from constituents who perceived him getting bloody fighting for school reform. Quie became known as an advocate for increased educational spending, and he may have gained some educational support for I-R legislators at the polls. As a Governor's aid noted: "It's going to be hard for them [DFL] to get out of the box of being against quality education."[63] Several DFL legislators were quick to retort that the spending increase had taken two-and-one-half years to work out. "I don't think it's a fair assumption to say it wouldn't have happened without Al Quie," said one DFL legislator.[64] Still, Quie did manage to set the precedent that, even in an era of declining enrollments, school funding could be increased while at the same time dropping the levels of income and property taxes.

Most respondents argued, however, that Quie would have benefited much more had his K-3 proposal been adopted. He would not have had to invest so much political capital in his legislation if he really did not care whether it won or lost. As one DFL legislator stated: "Al Quie is a lot more politically intelligent than he lets on to be. He plays this nice guy role, but he is politically tough."[65] Whatever his real motives, Al Quie's role in the K-3 legislative story was not nearly as influential as it could have been. A change in political strategy and skill on the Governor's part could have gained some sort of K-3 funding.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of our study have been set forth in the preceding chapters. These findings, and the analysis that supports them, suggest four general conclusions about the process through which Minnesota state government decided policy in the 1970s for its public schools:

1. While the decade witnessed significant changes in state school policymaking, the basic transformation in the system from a consensual to a fragmented one had already occurred by the beginning of the seventies.
2. Fragmentation expanded with the involvement of multiple decision arenas and the proliferation of interest groups; but these were offset by new linkage mechanisms and, more fundamentally, by the gravitational pull of legislative power.
3. Policymaking became more politicized as elected officials, partisan leaders, and interest groups--notably organized teachers--sought and exercised influence on school issues; however, the expansionary politics of surplus that characterized the decade seemed likely to be replaced in the early 1980s by the redistributive politics of scarcity.
4. Whatever the changes in state school policymaking, the process continued to be decisively shaped by the context of the state's Progressive political culture and its traditions of educational support and policy innovation.

Transformation

Twenty years ago, if the research of Wannebo[1] and the recollections of long-time observers are accurate, there existed in Minnesota a relatively stable state school policy system; interaction among school groups, agency administrators, and elected officials occurring in a predictable fashion.

The two dominant educational groups--the MSBA and the MEA--had established organizational arrangements and personal relationships that linked themselves to each other and to other public school supporters. An integral part of this consensual approach was the Department of Education. Indeed, only the militant posture of the MFT kept the profession from presenting a united front on major issues.

The school "establishment" was able to develop considerable internal agreement on legislative initiatives. Working closely with sympathetic lawmakers, primarily Conservatives (Republicans) whose caucus always controlled the Senate and usually had a majority in the House, the MSBA and the MEA constituted an effective lobby. To attain this status, these associations relied heavily on their perceived expertise, information-generating capacity, and the "special place" that the schools held among the objects of legislative attention. MSBA and MEA lobbyists were also solicited for their advice by governors when these public officials were formulating the education portion of their budget message. Typically, however, Minnesota governors did not take an active hand in school policymaking.

Powerful forces converged in the 1960s to produce a new configuration of state school policymaking.[2] First, collective bargaining between teachers and school boards arose as a divisive issue both in local districts and in the legislature, where competitive lobbying between the MSBA and the MEA supplanted the earlier cooperative approach. Secondly, spiraling school costs fueled a broad-based "taxpayers revolt" and, combined with growing doubts about the efficacy of education, they contributed to a popular demand for "accountability." As a consequence, the fiscal sensitivities of lawmakers became acute; they began to scrutinize school expenditures more closely. The visibility of education as a governmental function was heightened by the publicity given to student unrest, racial disputes, and a teacher strike in Minneapolis. A third factor that altered state school policymaking occurred in the realm of partisan politics--specifically, the evolution of a competitive two-party system and the coming to power of the DFL. Two-party competition generated a search for political issues, one source of which was education. The success of DFL brought into office a new group of political leaders, most notably Governor Wendell Anderson who made a campaign commitment to tax-school finance reform his overriding priority.

By the beginning of the 1970s, influence in the state school policy system had become diffuse, relationships were in flux, and power in the system was "up for grabs." The former allies--the MSBA and the MEA--were publicly at odds on a host of employer-employee issues. Various administrator groups sought to play an independent role at the state level. All these organizations, along with the MFT, became the sources of competing legislative initiatives. Cross-pressures mounted on the Department of Education, which found itself caught in the middle among contending interest groups and public officials. "Teacher power" became a political reality for elected officeholders as both the MEA and the MFT poured thousands of dollars, along with their potent local organizations, into electoral contests. Responding to their own leadership aspirations as well as to constituency concerns, state lawmakers adopted a more assertive posture on education legislation. And an outside group, the Citizens League, developed influential reports and recommendations on policy issues. Even the State Board moved away from its traditional passive role, attempting in concert with the Commissioner of Education to provide direction in several areas.

The breakdown of the old consensual pattern and the emergence of new and powerful actors were certainly among the principal factors causing the 1970s to be a decade of policy innovation in state school policymaking. Important state initiatives were undertaken in school finance, collective bargaining, racial desegregation, certification governance, regional services, and school district planning, evaluation, and reporting--among other areas. While each of these policies had its own distinct history, most reflected the expanded base for decision-making. This study provides much evidence to support the contention of one close observer that "important and innovative policy changes in education began to happen precisely as groups beyond the education establishment came into the problem area."[3]

Fragmentation

As is evident from the above description, the state school policy system in the seventies was anything but a monolithic entity. Quite the contrary, fragmentation had become the predominant characteristic of the system. The divisions among educator groups were only a part of the structural fragmentation of school policymaking at the state level. No single elite of lawmakers, much less lobbyists, dominated this process;

nor was there only one place where the decisive action occurred. Besides the many arenas--and corresponding sets of officeholders and their staffs--there was a proliferation of interest groups during the decade.

During the 1970s, the interest group milieu continued to expand as the diverse constituencies in education were increasingly heard at the state level. From the perspective of legislators, it must have seemed that almost every schooling "interest" had mobilized for lobbying; whether it was a regional alignment of local districts, a specialized professional group, or an organization claiming to speak for a certain type of child. This expansion of the state policy arena reflected several basic forces, one being the financial pressure on schools as a consequence of enrollment declines, price inflation, and eroding public support; another being the widespread belief among educators that state government had become the new locus of school policy action. Like some great magnet, St. Paul attracted to it the myriad filings of educator influence.

It had appeared for a time in the early seventies that the fragmented pattern of Minnesota state school politics might give way to one structured more narrowly by the labor-management cleavage. Instances of cooperation between the MEA and the MFT became more frequent in the '73 session, the two teacher groups being able to reach a compromise on a certification governance bill. And, though the leadership of each organization continued to claim exclusive credit for favorable legislation, the behavioral differences between the MEA and the MFT had largely ceased to exist. There also were economic considerations--the over supply of classroom teachers, the cost consciousness of legislators, and the resistance of local school boards--that motivated the two groups to seek common approaches and to discuss the possibility of merger. But the unification of teachers did not occur. Rather, the end of the decade was marked by escalating MEA-MFT rivalry; with bargaining unit elections in local districts, differing positions on state policy issues, and the efforts of MEA to extend its influence to noneducation public employees, producing a confrontation with MFT's parent organization, the AFL-CIO.[4] Nor was there much consolidation on the management side of the bargaining cleavage, with elementary and secondary principals particularly standing apart from the superintendents and school boards organizations.

Despite its growing fragmentation, state school policy bargaining in Minnesota did involve more than the formation of ad hoc, issue-oriented coalitions. There were individuals and organizations who actively sought to link up the disparate sources of legislative, executive, and interest group power in the policy system. Among those who performed this function were legislative staff persons, school lobbyists, and agency administrators. The most important linkage organization was BELL--Better Education Legislative Liaison. Representing all the major school groups and bringing together their lobbyists regularly during a legislative session, BELL functioned as an information clearinghouse, a social network, and a forum for key lawmakers and agency heads, as well as lobbyists, to test their policy ideas. Such linkage mechanisms partially overcame the fragmentation of state school policymaking.

More fundamental, however, than any of these trends was the policy ascendancy of the state legislature. This reflected, in part, the large DFL majorities from 1973-1978, and the continuity of leadership this provided in such influential positions as the chair of the House and Senate Education Committees. But it also reflected the growing "professionalization" of the legislature, especially with respect to staff. As a result, the legal description of the legislature being, ultimately, "the big school board" became increasingly the reality. And the Commissioner of Education and State Board of Education were pushed hard to gain the policy capacity to remain important policy actors. Moreover, individual legislators and their staffs were independent sources of initiative on school issues, as well as just responding to the initiatives of others. Often, all else became secondary to their preferences, priorities, and power. Whether the state school policy system would be "one of many strong actors," as described by one participant in the mid-1970s, or would come in time to be totally dominated by the legislature, was a central question as the seventies ended.

Politicization

The broadening of participation, intensification of group conflicts, and eruptions of public controversy--all signaled a politicization of state school policymaking. To be sure, "politics" in the most basic sense had always been present. But the transformation from a consensual to a conflictual pattern made the political nature of the process unmistakably clear. Not only were legislators often cast in an initiating role, but governors at times became the central actor. And their involvement activated partisan alignments, alignments that traditionally had made little difference in school policymaking. The controversy over the K-3 issue, in particular, became a test of party will and strength as the I-R Governor and his DFL adversaries anticipated the 1980 election when control of the legislature would be at stake.

There was, to be sure, information of increasing scope and sophistication being employed in the policy system. "Hard" data and quantitative analyses became prevalent in legislative decision-making, notably in such technical areas as school finance. But information never supplants politics. For many legislators, the only figures that appeared to count--the "bottom line"--were those that showed how many dollars their school districts were going to receive. Analyses that displayed district-by-district entitlements were emphasized in the computer "runs"; few efforts were made to apply through this technology statewide equity criteria to the distributional impact of school spending. Nor did greater precision in predicting school district benefits necessarily encourage policy innovation; sometimes it seemed to make it more difficult for legislators to rise above narrow constituency concerns. Even leaders were prone to use information politically; to select and organize it to support their predetermined positions. This was evident during the controversy over Quie's K-3 proposal. Both sides proclaimed "research shows" as the inevitable prelude to their own selected version of the data and their meaning.

Information undoubtedly does improve policy. It often does so, however, by becoming a power resource in the political process where it functions to strengthen the rationale of some participants and undermine the rationale of others.

Dramatic evidence of the political character of state school policymaking was also found in the influence strategies adopted by the teacher organizations. The MEA had completely abandoned the "Mr. Chips image" by the 1970s. Like its MFT rival, the Association sought electoral "clout" to buttress its formidable lobbying efforts. Drawing upon sizeable memberships and extensive grassroots activity--plus large campaign contributions through the use of "political action arms"--organized teachers became a powerful actor in deciding school policy. Though teacher power tended to be exaggerated and excessively personalized by the media,[5] it was an important new political force. And it was probably the main reason why the "school lobby" was widely seen as being among the top lobbying groups in the capitol, with its collective influence perceived as growing during the 1970s even as it became more fragmented.

Adjustment to a politicized environment was required by an organization that sought to have a voice in state school policymaking. The MSBA did encounter much difficulty in the '73 session, the first having a DFL majority, for its access points and policy advice were geared to a legislature controlled by the Conservative Caucus. By 1979, however, the MSBA apparently had adjusted well. Its perceived influence remained close to that of the MEA and usually above that attributed to the MFT, these organizations constituting a "Big Three," so to speak, within the public school lobby. Like the teachers, the MSBA could supplement its power in St. Paul with an impressive local effort, as was vividly demonstrated in the 1977 controversy over school district reorganization.

School administrators, more than any group, had experienced a precipitous decline in state policy influence in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At one time, they had controlled MEA. This ended in the sixties and the administrators' own organizational resources did not produce much influence in the legislature. The mid-1970s did see improvement in this situation, from an administrator perspective. Though not in the front ranks of the powerful, the MASA and the principals associations were usually identified among the influential school groups. And two of these organizations were considering the use of a "political action arm" to make selective campaign contributions, as the decade came to a close.

The politicized policy environment imposed severe constraints on the leadership role of the education agency--the State Board, Commissioner, and Department of Education. The agency bore the brunt of conflicting demands from school groups, legislative leaders, the governor's office, and local districts. Still, it was able to seize the initiative in the early 1970s on several issues, notably, racial desegregation and regional educational service areas. But as the legislature began to draw more and more school issues into its policy orbit, the leadership role of the education agency became problematic. Despite being a much stronger agency at the end of the decade than at the beginning--a consequence of top administrator appointments, internal department reorganization, and enhanced information generating capability--it had to work much harder just to offset the political cross-pressures and to have a significant influence on legislative policymaking.

If words like "conflict" and "power" characterized state school politics in the 1970s, they are likely to be even more apt descriptions in the early 1980s. This is so because the fiscal surpluses that conditioned the process and tempered its contentiousness are predicted to give way to deficits.[6] In the seventies, new dollars were nearly always available, after existing claims were satisfied, to support program expansion and to encourage policy innovation. In the crucial area of school finance, the politics typically was one of leveling up through a "something-for-everyone" legislative compromise.

The effects of a pluralistic and politicized policy system operating on a budgetary surplus were mixed. On one hand, it meant expansion, innovation, and acceptance. On the other hand, it was conducive to the evolution, following the reform legislation of 1971, of lengthy and complicated omnibus school aid bills, a veritable mosiac of vested interests almost immune to fundamental change. Fuhrman states the dilemma well:

> A bill which includes compromises and benefits for almost everyone clearly has an enhanced chance of passage. This is particularly the case when care is taken to assure the support of all the specialized constituencies interested in educational finance...

> When a state's aid formula is overburdened with special adjustments and provisions, those items become entrenched. Constituencies solidify around specific pieces of the pie; it is difficult if not impossible to achieve anything except the most marginal, incremental changes. The result is that year-after-year there is tinkering with the formula instead of change. Each layer of tinkering further compounds the possibility of meaningful change.[7]

Progressivism

Whether the climate of scarcity, should it come to pass, will again transform the state school policy system is unclear. Without the political grease of fiscal surplus to lubricate the process, policymaking tends to be contentious, difficult, and dissatisfying--at least to the participants. Such heightened and hazardous conflict could further fragment the school groups. Or it could force them to cooperate more closely. It could stimulate protectionist turf guarding. Or it could encourage the development of a priority-oriented policy system. It could foster such intense competition that only the powerful will succeed. Or it could enlarge the base of citizen as well as educator involvement in school policymaking. Whatever happens, though, will be determined by more than just the political forces operating in St. Paul; it also will be shaped by the Progressive cultural traditions of the state.

Minnesota's Progressivism permeated school legislation in the 1970s. The high level of financial support was maintained; significant advances were made toward greater equity of treatment.[8] Citizen participation received emphasis in the PER and planning laws. The state's reputation as a pacesetter was enhanced by innovations in school finance, racial desegregation, certification governance, and school district planning, along with new programs in early childhood and the family, community, and handicapped education. Finally, there were the people who made the system work; lobbyists as well as lawmakers, staff persons as well as public officials. These men and women, regardless of personal motive or party affiliation, well exemplified the public service ideals of the culture and its capacity to recruit able people to this service. They give hope to those concerned about whether the state school policy system will respond creatively in the 1980s to the prospect of fiscal stringency, redistributive politics, and partisan strife.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

[1] Article VIII, Section I.

[2] Kramer v. Renville County, 144 Minnesota 195, 175 N.W. 101 (1919).

[3] The Board of Teaching "Autonomy Bill," Senate File 618, was passed early in the 1980 legislative session.

[4] Nancy Paulu, "Casmey Might Be In Job Only One Year," Minneapolis Star, (February 1, 1977).

[5] Jack Leppert and Dorothy Routh, "An Analysis of State School Finance Systems as Related to Declining Enrollments," Declining Enrollments: The Challenge of the Coming Decade, (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education 1978), pp. 187-208.

[6] "Minnesota Public Enrollments in An Era of Decline," State Department of Education Special Report, Vol. 13, No. 1 (St. Paul: Minnesota State Department of Education 1978), pp. 1-22.

[7] Tim L. Mazzoni and Van D. Mueller, "School District Planning for Enrollment Decline: The Minnesota Approach," Phi Delta Kappan (February, 1980), p. 406.

[8] See particularly the articles by Millard L. Gieske, and by Donald Leavitt and Bruce Nord on Minnesota's political culture in Millard L. Gieske and Edward R. Brandt (eds.), Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1977), pp. 1-54.

[9] Daniel J. Elazar, American Federalism: A View From the States, 2nd ed. (New York: Thomas Y Crowell, 1966), pp. 93-107.

[10] Carl H. Chrislock, The Progressive Era in Minnesota, 1899-1918 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1971), p. 198.

[11] Gieske and Brandt (eds.), *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics*, p. 41.

[12] Tax Study Commission, *Staff Progress Report: A Collection of Work Papers* (St. Paul: Tax Study Commission, 1973), pp. 93-94.

[13] National Education Association, *Ranking of the States, 1972*, p. 62, and *Ranking of the States, 1979*, p. 36.

[14] Elazar, *American Federalism*, p. 98.

[15] Charles R. Adrian, "The Origins of Minnesota's Non-partisan Legislature," in Rhoda R. Gilman and June Drenning Holmquist (eds.), *Selections from Minnesota History* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), p. 286.

[16] John H. Fenton, *Midwest Politics* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), pp. 75-116.

[17] Gieske and Brandt (eds.), *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics*, p. 3.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., pp. 8-22.

[20] G. Theodore Mitau, *Politics in Minnesota*, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), p. 53.

[21] Ibid., pp. 83-95.

[22] This is Millard L. Gieske's concern expressed in Gieske and Brandt (eds.), *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics*, pp. 2 & 29.

[23] Ibid., p. 3.

[24] Leavitt and Nord report this figure in Gieske and Brandt (eds.), *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics*, p. 49.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Interviews with Minnesota legislators in January, 1973, and June-August, 1979.

[27] The reform was instituted by Republican Governor Harold E. Stassen. See Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 538.

[28] Interview with Commissioner of Education, January, 1973.

[29] Interview with Commissioner of Education, August, 1979.

[30] Jack L. Walker, "Innovation in State Politics," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines (eds.), Politics in the American States (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), pp. 357-388.

[31] Tax Study Commission, Staff Progress Report: A Collection of Staff Work Papers (St. Paul: Minnesota Tax Study Commission, January, 1973), pp. 333-348.

[32] Gieske and Brandt (eds), Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics, p. 51.

CHAPTER II: POLICYMAKING RELATIONSHIPS

[1] Martin Burlingame and Terry G. Geske, "State Politics and Education: An Examination of Selected Multiple-State Case Studies," Educational Administration Quarterly (Spring, 1979), p. 71.

[2] Frithjob R. Wannebo, "'Meet and Confer' A Study in Minnesota Politics of Education" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, December, 1971), p. 59. Wannebo's dissertation is the only analysis of Minnesota state education politics in the 1960s, and we have relied upon it heavily for our description of that period.

[3] G. Theodore Mitau, Politics in Minnesota, 2nd rev. ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), pp. 123-126.

[4] Interview with school lobbyist, January, 1973.

[5] Association of Metropolitan School Districts, "Summary Data Sheet 1978-1979" (The Association, 1978), p. 4.

[6] See copies for the 1979 legislative session (January-May, 1979) of MEA's Advocate and MFT's Action.

[7] BELL Constitution, February, 1976, p. 1.

[8] Interviews with school lobbyists, February-May, 1979.

[9] Beth Sullivan, "Education Lobbyists in Minnesota" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, August, 1980), p. 123.

[10] Betty Wilson, "Lobbyists Offer Facts, Not Favors," Minneapolis Star.(February 9, 1979); Dan Oberdofer, "Lobbyists' Image Changing But Goals Intact," Minneapolis Tribune (March 9, 1980).

[11] Wannebo attempted to survey all legislators who had been in the 1967 session. His rate of return, however, was quite low (around 25%), and only the 29 lawmakers who said they had served on one of the education committees are included here.

[12] "Lobbyists Who Reach Ears of Legislature," Minneapolis Star (February 9, 1979).

[13] Quoted in Leslie Scanlon, "Don Hill: The MEA is His Empire," Minneapolis Star (August 5, 1980).

[14] Betty Wilson, "Lobbyists Offer Facts, Not Favors," Minneapolis Star (February 9, 1979).

[15] House Public Information Office, Minnesota House of Representatives 1979-1980 Membership List (Public Information Office, 1979).

[16] The term and definition is from Jeffrey M. Berry, Lobbying for The People (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 269-272.

[17] Sullivan, "Education Lobbyists in Minnesota," pp. 109-110.

[18] State Board powers are described in League of Women Voters, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (St. Paul: League of Women Voters, 1970), p.8.

[19] Citizens League, "Accountability in Schools" (November 22, 1972), p. 31.

[20] Tim L. Mazzoni, Jr., "Developing Effective and Visible State Boards of Education" *The Imperative of Leadership*, Vol. II, No. 4 (National Association of State Boards of Education, October, 1976), p. 10.

[21] Homer Williamson, "The Growth of Power of the Minnesota Governor" in Millard Gieske and Edward R. Brandt (eds.), *Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1977), p. 257.

[22] Editor's Introduction in Ibid., p. 242.

[23] Commissioner's School Finance Task Force, "School Finance Task Force Report," (A Report to the State Board of Education, January, 1973), p. 41.

[24] The words are by Lawrence Gladieux and Thomas Wolanin in *Congress and the Colleges* as reported in the *Minneapolis Tribune* (December 4, 1977).

[25] Williamson, "The Growth of Power of the Minnesota Governor," p. 248.

[26] Ibid., p. 257.

[27] Steve Brandt, "Coleman Backs Quie on Schools," *Minneapolis Tribune* (May 9, 1979).

[28] Robert Whereatt, "DFL in Legislature Must Run Fast to Stay Even," *Minneapolis Star* (January 17, 1980).

[29] Frederick Wirt, "School Policy Culture and State Decentralization" in Jay Scribner (ed.), *The Politics of Education* (1977 NSSE Yearbook), p. 173.

[30] See series on "The Changing Legislature" (in Minnesota), *Minneapolis Tribune* (February 5-9, 1978).

[31] "Minnesotans Grade Their Public Schools--Academics Better Than Discipline," Minneapolis Tribune (April 17, 1980).

[32] "The Changing Legislature," Minneapolis Tribune (February 8, 1978).

[33] Samuel C. Patterson, "American State Legislators and Public Policy," in Herbert Jacob and Kenneth N. Vines (eds.), Politics in the American States, 3rd. ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), p. 175.

[34] Edward R. Brandt, "Legislative Voting Behavior in Minnesota," in Gieske and Brandt (eds.), Perspectives on Minnesota Government and Politics, p. 213.

[35] Jo Malmsten, "Schools Will be Aided with Additional $1.97 Billion," Minnesota PTSA News (October-November, 1979), p. 4.

[36] Douglas Mitchell, "State Legislative Politics: Findings from an NIE Study," (Unpublished paper, nd).

CHAPTER III: THREE STATE SCHOOL POLICY ISSUES

Case I: Tax and School Finance Reform

[1] Sections of the ACIR report are reprinted in Minnesota State Department of Education, Update (March 1972), p. 5.

[2] Unpublished data from Van D. Mueller, Department of Educational Administration, University of Minnesota (January, 1972).

[3] Percentage figures are from Anthony Morley, "Minnesota," A Legislators Guide to School Finance, (Denver: The Education Commission of the States, August 1972), p. 34. Despite a few minor errors, Morley's account of the tax-school finance reform effort in the 1971 Minnesota legislative session is an accurate and insightful one. We have drawn heavily upon it for certain parts of our description.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Van Dusartz v.Hatfield, U. S. District Court, District of Minnesota, Third Division No. 3-71 cir. 243, pp. 4-5.

[7] Wilken, op. cit., p. 3.

[8] Rolland F. Hatfield, "Report to Governor's Minnesota Property Tax Study Advisory Committee" (Unpublished report sponsored by Minnesota State Planning Agency, November, 1970), p. i.

[9] Gerald F. Weiszhaas, "The 1971 Omnibus Tax Act," Staff Progress Report: A Collection of Staff Work Papers (Unpublished report by the Minnesota Tax Study Commission, January, 1973), p. 31.

[10] Results of the study for 49 of the 81 communities surveyed are reported in Minneapolis Tribune (March 8, 1971).

[11] Minnesota State Department of Education, "Financing Education in Minnesota: 1972-73, A Primer," Update (Summer, 1972), p. 4.

[12] Morley, op. cit., p. 36.

[13] Some comparative data on school bond referenda are contained in Frederick M. Wirt and Michael W. Kirst, The Political Web of American Schools (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1972), pp. 138-141.

[14] Gerald W. Christenson, "Planning for Human Resources Development for Minnesota in the 1970's," Financing Special Education in Minnesota (Division of Educational Administration, University of Minnesota, Fall, 1972), p. 83.

[15] Citizens League, "New Formulas for Revenue Sharing in Minnesota," (Unpublished report prepared by the Citizens League Committee on Revenue Distribution, Minneapolis, Mn., September 1, 1970).

[16] Personal communication from Citizens League staff member, February, 1974.

[17] Interview with state legislator, June, 1973.

[18] Finlay Lewis, "School-Tax Proposal May Decide Governor Race," Minneapolis Tribune (October 11, 1970); Morley, op. cit., p. 37.

[19] Interviews with state legislators, January and June, 1973.

[20] Christenson, op. cit., p. 81.

[21] Morley, op. cit., pp. 38-40.

[22] Ibid., p. 40.

[23] Information based on interviews with state legislators and Governor's aides, January and June, 1973.

[24] Statement from Commissioner to State Board, April 25, 1980.

[25] Interviews with state legislators and Governor's aides, January and June, 1973.

[26] Information based on interviews with state legislators and educational interest group leaders, January-February, 1973.

[27] Interviews with state legislators, January-February, 1973.

[28] Morley, op. cit., p. 43.

[29] Minnesota Education News (March 12, 1971).

[30] Minnesota State Department of Education, "Partnership in Priorities," (Bienniel Report July 1, 1970 - June 30, 1972), p. 51.

[31] For articles summarizing the legislative conflict, see the Minneapolis Star (November 1, 1971).

[32] Ibid.

[33] This corresponds to Morley's assessment. Morley op. cit., pp. 43-44.

[34] Minneapolis Star (November 1, 1971).

[35] Van Dusartz v. Hatfield, pp. 3-11.

[36] Minneapolis Star (November 1, 1971).

[37] Information based on interviews with state legislators, January-February, 1973. Six of the ten members of the Tax Conference Committee were interviewed by our research staff.

[38] Ibid.

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[40] Minnesota State Department of Education, "Minnesota Education 1973: An Overview," Update (July, 1973), p. 1.

[41] John S. Hoyt, "The New Minnesota Tax Law," T. B. Evensen Newsletter, (November, 1971), p. 1 & 2.

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[43] Ibid.

Case II: State Legislation for School District Planning

[1] "As of March 15, 1978, 33 states had taken some kind of action to mandate the setting of minimum competency standards," Chris Pipho, "Minimum Competency Testing in 1978: A Look at State Standards," Phi Delta Kappan (May, 1978), p. 585.

[2] Bettie Gibson, "A Unique People-Input Experiment in Minnesota Education," Minneapolis Star (October 1, 1979).

[3] A summary account of Minnesota school finance legislation is found in Michael J. Lovett and Van D. Mueller, "Equity and Equalization in Minnesota School Finance," Journal of Education Finance (Spring, 1978), pp. 450-64.

[4] Alfred Urzi, "Policy Issues Surrounding the Education Service Area Concept in the State of Minnesota," (Unpublished report to the Minnesota Educational Seminar, September 27-28, 1974), p. 17.

[5] C. M. Achilles, et al., "Regionalism and Cooperation in Education," Planning and Changing (Winter, 1974), p. 217.

[6] Interview with top department administrators, August, 1979.

[7] Minnesota Department of Education, "1971 Legislative Proposals."

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[9] Ibid., p. 25.

[10] Southwest and West Central Educational Service Area, "How Can ESA Serve You."

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[12] Ibid., p. 15.

[13] Ibid., p. 15-16.

[14] Ibid., p. 27.

[15] Gregor Pinney, "State School Board Favors Metro Agency," Minneapolis Tribune (January 13, 1975).

[16] Larry Millett, "ECSU, CEPS, MESA? Education Marches On," St. Paul Pioneer Press (February 15, 1975).

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[19] Millett, op. cit.

[20] Letter to Representative Carl Johnson from the State Planning Agency, March 27, 1976.

[21] Citizens League, "Accountability in Schools: Not a Threat But a Real Hope" (November 22, 1972), p. i.

[22] Ibid., p. ii.

[23] Letter to Representative Carl Johnson from the State Planning Agency, March 27, 1976.

[24] Henry Winkels, "The MFT's Reaction to the Latest Proposals on Accountability Legislation" (Unpublished paper, November, 1975), p. 1.

[25] "Piggybacking on Educational Assessment," Minneapolis Tribune (February 21, 1975).

[26] State Planning Agency, "An Educational Accountability System for Schools" (Unpublished paper, March, 1975), pp. 1 & 2.

[27] "Monitoring the Schools," Minneapolis Star (May 7, 1977).

[28] Letter to Speaker Martin O. Sabo from Representative Carl Johnson, January 22, 1976.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Comparison of original draft of H. F. 2332 sent to Revisor with copy of bill marked "as amended and passed by the House Education Committee, March 3, 1976."

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[32] Jeanne L. Campbell, "The Passage of PER: An Analysis of the Political Process Behind the Bill" (Unpublished paper, November 20, 1979), p. 12.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Planning, Evaluation and Reporting Legislation (PER), M.S. 123.741.

[36] Campbell, *op.cit.*, p. 11 & 12.

[37] Gregory Jerome Waddick, "An Analysis of Differential Perceptions of the Minnesota Education Community Relating to Educational Quality Control," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, June, 1976), pp. 23, 44-45, 140-144.

[38] Minnesota Department of Education, *Update* (April, 1979), p. 1.

[39] Roberta Block, "An Evaluation of Minimal Academic Competencies: Philosophical, Political, or Educational Control?" (Unpublished paper, Winter, 1979), p. 12.

[40] Gayle H. Anderson, "Criteria for Reorganization of School Districts" (Unpublished paper, May 2, 1975), p. 16.

[41] Senate File 156, 1977 Session of the Minnesota Legislature.

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[43] Gary Dawson, "School Bill May Cause 'A Civil War'," *St. Paul Pioneer Press* (February 13, 1977).

[44] Minnesota Department of Education, *The Condition of Education* (St. Paul: Department of Education, February, 1980), p. 8.

[45] Stephen Alnes, "Concept Easy to Sell but School Merger Bill Isn't," *Minneapolis Star* (February, 1977).

[46] Dawson, *op.cit.*

[47] Alnes, *op.cit.*

[48] Dawson, *op.cit.*

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Letter from W. A. Wettergren, Executive Secretary, MSBA, to School Board Members and Superintendents.

[56] Dawson, *op. cit.*

[57] Draft of unpublished proposal dated March 23, 1977.

[58] Alnes, *op. cit.*, (February, 1977).

[59] Ibid.

[60] Advisory Council on Fluctuating School Enrollment, "A Final Report to the Minnesota State Legislature: The Impact of Fluctuating School Enrollments on Minnesota's Educational System," Vol. I and II (St. Paul: The Council, January, 1977).

[61] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 29.

[62] Gibson, *op. cit.*

[63] None of the planning laws were "big ticket" items by state government standards. For a two-year period, the ECSU had appropriations of nearly one million dollars ($499,950 annually), the PER legislation received $420,000, and $700,000 was appropriated to support comprehensive planning.

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[65] Minnesota State Planning Agency, Minnesota Department of Education, and Minnesota Association of School Administrators, *Managing School Districts With Declining Enrollments. Planning Assistance Manual and Case Studies* (St. Paul, July 1976). Also see Minnesota State Planning Agency, *The Condition of Education: Facts and Issues about Minnesota Schools.* (St. Paul December, 1977).

Case III: The "K-3" Proposal

[1] Governor Albert H. Quie, "Inaugural Address," Minnesota State Legislature, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 4, 1979.

[2] Governor Albert H. Quie, "Testimony on H. F. 930: Primary Grades Instructional Improvement Program," School Aids Division House Education Committee, St. Paul, Minnesota, April 6, 1979.

[3] Personal interview with Governor Quie's staff member, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 14, 1980.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Quie, "Testimony on H. F. 930." April 6, 1979.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Personal interview with Governor Quie's staff member, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 14, 1980.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Betty Wilson, "Quie's First 90 Days," Minneapolis Star (March 23, 1979).

[11] Nancy Paulu, "Feud Over Class Size Beings Anew," Minneapolis Star (January 10, 1979).

[12] Ibid.

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[15] Michael Kirst, "Coalition Building for School Finance Reform: The Case of California," *Journal of Education Finance* (Summer 1978), pp. 29-45.

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[20] Steve Brandt, "Miscues Doomed IR School Aid Plan," *Minneapolis Tribune* (May 15, 1979).

[21] Steven Dornfeld, "Senate Kills Quie Proposal to Cut Class Sizes," *Minneapolis Tribune* (May 11, 1979).

[22] Personal interview with Governor Quie's staff member, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 14, 1980.

[23] Brandt, "Lobbyists Win," *Minneapolis Tribune* (April 20, 1979).

[24] Steve Brandt, "Price of Reducing Class Size Heads School-Aid Issues," *Minneapolis Tribune* (April 2, 1979).

[25] Ibid.

[26] Steve Brandt, "House Unit Approves DFL School Aid Bill," *Minneapolis Tribune* (April 29, 1979).

[27] Steven Dornfeld, "So Far, Quie Has Been, Well...Lacking in Color," *Minneapolis Tribune* (December 31, 1978).

[28] Wilson, "Quie's 90," *Minneapolis Star* (March 23, 1979).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Brandt, "Miscues," (May 15, 1979).

[32] Steven Dornfeld, "Inexperienced Quie Won Something But Stumbled Often," Minneapolis Tribune (May 27, 1979).

[33] Personal interview with Minnesota State Senator, St. Paul, Minnesota, January 14, 1980 .

[34] Tom Davies, "Freshman Legislator Lives up to Early Hint of Boldness," Minneapolis Tribune (May 20, 1979).

[35] Steve Brandt, "Senate Unit Shreds Quie School Plan," Minneapolis Tribune (April 21, 1979).

[36] Dornfeld, "Senate Kills Proposal," Minneapolis Tribune (May 11, 1979).

[37] Personal interview with Minnesota State Senator, January 14, 1980 .

[38] Personal interview with Governor Quie's Staff member, January 14, 1980 .

[39] Dornfeld, "Quie Stumbled," Minneapolis Tribune (May 27, 1979).

[40] Brandt, "Miscues," Minneapolis Tribune (May 15, 1979).

[41] "Legislative Briefing," St. Paul Pioneer Press (May 4, 1979).

[42] Dornfeld, "Quie Stumbled," Minneapolis Tribune (May 27, 1979).

[43] Wilson, "Quie's 90," Minneapolis Star (March 23, 1979).

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[48] Brandt, "Price of Reducing," *Minneapolis Tribune* (April 2, 1979).

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[51] Dornfeld, "Quie Stumbled," *Minneapolis Tribune* (May 27, 1979).

[52] Brandt, "Extra Mill," *Minneapolis Tribune* (February 8, 1979).

[53] Nancy Paulu, "Study Backs Smaller Class Size," *Minneapolis Star* (April 18, 1979).

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[55] Steve Brandt, "Quie School Example May Hurt His Aid Argument," *Minneapolis Tribune* (April 5, 1979).

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[62] Personal interview with Minnesota State Senator, January 14, 1980.

[63] Brandt, "Lobbyists Win," Minneapolis Tribune (April 20, 1979).

[64] Ibid.

[65] Personal interview with Minnesota DFL State Senator, November 23, 1979.

CHATER IV: CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

[1] Wannebo's dissertation, completed in 1971, constitutes the only research on Minnesota state education politics in the 1960s.

[2] These forces were at work, of course, in states besides Minnesota.

[3] Personal communication from Citizens League staff member, February, 1974.

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[7] Susan Fuhrman, "The Politics and Process of School Finance Reform," Journal of Education Finance (Fall, 1978), p. 161.